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TTS

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

WORKS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SELECTIONS FROM HIS

LETTERS.

NEW-BEDFORD:

PRINTED FOR ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, JUN.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Works of ISAAC PENINGTON, from which the present volume is compiled, were written about the middle of the seventeeth century, (having been first published during the reign of Charles II.) They have had several editions in Great-Britain, the last of which, in four volumes octavo, was printed in the year 1784. The Author was an eminent Minister of the Society of Friends, and suffered greatly, through frequent imprisonments, in those days of persecution, for a faithful adherence to the principles he has so ably advocated.

The treatises of which these volumes are composed, were written at different times, and on various occasions. Some of them give a general view of the author's sentiments; some are in reply to the attacks or animadversions of others; many are addressed to the different religious professors of that age; and others to the members of his own religious community. But on whatever occasion written, whether to convince, to persuade, or defend, we find them every where manifesting the same Christian spirit; every where animated by one principle, and tending to one object; the denial of self, of our own will, of our own wisdom in all its specious appearances and subtle devices; and through this, the exaltation of the principle of Truth, [the Seed, the Pearl, the Light, or Grace of God, Christ within,] revealed in the heart of

man, as the alone sufficient Guide and Teacher. Redeemed from the world, through many tribulations, and deeply experienced in the ways of God with man, he was indeed eminently qualified to declare unto others what he had learnt in the school of Christ, what 'he had' therein 'heard, what he had seen, and handled of the word of life.'

Should any Reader be disposed to think that the Author sometimes speaks too highly or too confidently of his own attainments in the Truth, let him reflect, that it is not to any thing of or in himself, as man, but the principle of Truth itself, he refers to, as producing the effects he describes; abundantly acknowledging, with the Apostle, that it was by the Grace of God that he was what he was. But while in that state from which all boasting is necessarily excluded, how powerfully convincing must have been the appeal to others, to come and see, and judge of the principle professed and recommended, by the fruits it produced in the professors. For want of *this* union, how greatly has the cause of Christianty suffered in every age.

These valuable Works have never been reprinted in this country, though well known, and highly esteemed by many Friends. Being voluminous and expensive, in their present form, it has been thought desirable, that a Selection should be made from them, adapted, from its size and price, for more extensive circulation. With this view, the present compilation was commenced, and has been brought to a close. Though apparently an easy task, some difficulties have occurred in its execution. Between pieces, having in the judgment of the Compiler, nearly equal claims to selection, he has in some instances found it difficult to decide, and is not unaware, that some with whom the work is familiar, may be disposed to think,

that a different choice would have been preferable. It may also be proper to observe, that a few of the pieces in this Collection are very considerably abridged, particularly towards the close, and others slightly so, of which some intimation is generally given; but that no censure of the parts that are left is hereby intended, or any disposition felt to lessen such portions in the estimation of the Reader. An abridgment in some instances appeared necessary, the better to adapt some of the pieces to a publication of this limitted extent. But should any derive instruction from what is here presented, it is hoped they will, when they have opportunity for it, be induced to take up the original work, where they will find much that has strong claims upon the attention of every thoughtful and enquiring mind. Let all, indeed, be read in the spirit in which it was written, and instruction, it is believed, will be derived from all.

In reference, however, to some of these Writings, embracing deeply spiritual views, and evincing large experience in the 'mysteries of godliness,' the cautionary advice of the Author, (page 263 of this Selection,) seems very applicable:

"He that readeth these things, let him not *strive* to comprehend them; but be content with what he feeleth thereof suitable to his own present estate; and as the life grows in him, and he in the life, and he comes to meet with the things and exercises spoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themselves open to him, and be useful and serviceable to him so far as the Lord pleaseth, he keeping to the leading, savour and principle of life in himself, wherein alone his knowledge, sight, growth, and experiences, are safe."

The Writings of PENINGTON breathe so pure a spirit of Christianity, and manifest an attachment so ardent to the great cause in which all the powers of his mind were engaged, that we think but few will feel any disposition to criticise the language in which his thoughts are clothed. While it is evident that he was too much occupied with his subject to attend to the beauties of composition, his style is that of the age in which he wrote. During the one hundred and fifty years that have since elapsed, the English language has been polished and refined; but a reference to some of these pieces, we think would be sufficient to shew, that it has not, in the same proportion gained in strength of expression. They were, however, never offered to the public as literary compositions. The object of the Writer was not to amuse, but to instruct; and to instruct in things the most deeply interesting to man, even those which regard his eternal peace.

The Compiler will feel amply rewarded, should his labours have a tendency to make these valuable Writings more generally known, particularly to the Society of which he is a Member.

NEW-BEDFORD, 9 mo. 1, 1818.

Where paragraphs are inserted out of the order in which they originally stood, they are generally inclosed, [in this manner,] between brackets.

All references from this Compiliation, are to the octavo edition of the original work.

A table of Contents is given at the close of the Volume.

THE following brief Memoirs of the Life of ISAAC PENINGTON, collected from the testimonies of his Friends, and other authentic accounts, were prefixed to a volume of his Letters, published in 1796.

"He was the eldest son of Isaac Penington, many years an alderman of London, and for two years successively mayor of the city. He was born about the year 1617; his education was suitable to his quality among men, having the advantages of the schools and universities of his own country, joined with the conversation of some of the most considerable men of his time. His father's situation in public business, gave him pretence enough to share of the world's greatness; but he refused its glory, and chose rather a life dedicated to religion and retirement. He received impressions of piety very early; and they had so good an effect upon him, that he was preserved from the evils of the age, and became the wonder of his kindred and familiars, for his awful life and frequent retirements, his declining company that might interrupt his meditations, and being disposed to a life of mourning. Yet this sorrow did not flow from a sense of former vices, for he was inclined to virtue from his childhood; but with Habakkuk, from the dread he had of the majesty of God, and his desire to find a resting-place in the great day of trouble. In the midst of which exercises nothing gave him ease or comfort, but the smiles of God's countenance upon his soul.

"About the year 1648, he married Mary, the widow of Sir William Springet, a religious wo-

man; but he continued in a seeking state for some years after; till at length he was convinced of the principles of Truth, as professed by the people called Quakers, and joined himself to this society about 1658, being then forty-one years of age. Neither his worldly station, the most considerable of any that had closed with this way, nor the debasement it brought upon his learning and wisdom, nor yet that reproach and loss which attended his public espousing of it, did deter him from owning and embracing it. Thus parting with all he had not received of God, he received a new stock from heaven, wherein the Lord prospered him; the dew of heaven rested upon his branch and root, and he grew rich and fruitful in heavenly treasure, full of love, patience, and long-suffering; exemplary in his duty to God and men; zealous, yet tender; wise, yet humble; a constant and early comer to meetings, and watchful and reverent in them; one who loved power and life more than words; and as for that he waited, so he would be often affected with it, and made to utter such testimonies as were to the help of the poor and the needy, the weary and heavy laden, the true sojourners and travellers to the eternal rest and city of God."

This was the testimony of one well acquainted with him: "And as it was given to him to believe in Christ, so he had also to suffer for his sake; his imprisonments being many, and some of them long; which he underwent with great constancy and quietness of mind. He was first imprisoned in the year 1661, in Aylesbury gaol, for worshipping God in his own house; and endured great hardship for seventeen weeks, in a cold incommodious room, without a chimney, great part of the time in winter; from which usage his body con-

tracted so great a disorder, that for several weeks after he was not able to turn himself in his bed. He was imprisoned five times after this on account of his religious profession; (being confined at one time in Aylesbury gaol, eighteen months, and in Reading gaol, which was his last imprisonment, twenty-one months.) And being of a tender constitution, his life was greatly endangered by the hardship he endured.

[To his patience under suffering, the following testimony is borne by one who had often been with him in bonds. See volume I. p. xxviii.

"I have had knowledge of him near twenty years, especially in suffering; for it pleased the Lord so to order it, that our lot fell together in prison several times; and I may say it was well it was so; for being made willing by the power of God (that did attend him) to suffer with great patience, cheerfulness, contentedness, and true nobility of spirit, he was a good example to me and others. I do not remember that ever I saw him cast down or dejected in his spirit in the time of his close confinement, nor speak hardly of those that persecuted him; for he was of that temper as to love enemies, and to do good to those that hated him; having received a measure of that virtue from Christ, his Master, that taught him so to do. Indeed I may say, in the prison he was a help to the weak, being made instrumental in the hand of the Lord for that end; with much more than at present I shall express. O the remembrance of the glory that did often over-shadow us in the place of confinement! so that indeed the prison was made by the Lord to us (who was powerfully with us) as a pleasant palace! I was often, with many more, by those streamings of life that did many times run through his vessel, greatly overcome with the pure

presence and overcoming love of our God, that was plentifully shed abroad in our hearts."]

"Thus through many tribulations did he enter the kingdom, having been long exercised, tried, and approved of the Lord. As his outward man grew in years, his inward man grew in grace, and the knowledge of his Redeemer; for it was observable among them that knew him in his declining time, that when the candle of his natural life burnt dimmer, his soul waxed stronger, and, like a replenished lamp, shone with greater lustre. It may be further said, that as his profession was adorned by a life of piety and virtue, and the constant practice of what he recommended to others; so his good judgment appeared in two eminent respects:

"First, he was urgent, that all those who knew any thing of the gift of ministry to others, would always wait in their several exercises, to be endued with matter and power from on high, before they opened their mouths in a testimony for the Lord; and that at all times, as well out of meetings as in them, they might live so near the Lord, as to feel the key of David opening the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom: and by experiencing the depth of the heavenly travail, and the trials, deliverances, and consolations of it; with the dominion and victory that in the end, by perseverance, are obtained; they might be as true saviours on Mount Sion, the salt of the world, thoroughly furnished to every good word and work, and master-builders in God's house; that a pure and living stream of ministry might be continued, and conveyed to the generations to come.

"His excellency in another respect was, his love to the unity of brethren: whatever struck at

that, he no sooner perceived, than he endeavoured to oppose it with all his might.

"In conclusion, it may be said, that as he was a light in the church, so he was a blessing to his own family: a loving husband, a tender and prudent father, and a just and kind master. Many were the gifts God honoured him with, which he made use of to the praise of the great Giver. Being thus fit to live, he was prepared to die, when the summons came to him; which was in the sixty-third year of his age, on the 8th of the eighth month, 1679; when he fell sick in his journey into Kent, and departed this life after about a week's illness. His remains were brought to his house at Chalfonts, in Buckinghamshire, and interred in the burial ground at Jordan's, in the same county."

☞ See Testimonies of George Fox, William Penn, and others, prefixed to the original Work. See also Appendix to this Volume.

SELECTIONS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

ISAAC PENNINGTON.

A Brief Account of my Soul's Travel towards the Holy Land, and how at length it pleased the Lord to join my heart to his pure, holy, living Truth; wherein I have witnessed the New Covenant, and Peace with the Lord therein. With a few words concerning the Way of Knowing and Receiving the Truth: which is not done by Disputes and Reasonings of the Mind about it; but in waiting aright for the Demonstration and Power of God's Spirit to open the Heart and Understanding, and by submissive Obedience to it, even in its lowest Appearances in the inward parts.

My heart from my childhood was pointed towards the Lord, whom I feared and longed after from my tender years; wherein I felt, that I could not be satisfied with (nor indeed seek after) the things of this perishing world, which naturally pass away; but I desired true sense of, and unity with, that which abideth forever. There was somewhat indeed then still within me (even the seed of

eternity) which leavened and balanced my spirit almost continually; but I knew it not distinctly, so as to turn to it, and give up to it, entirely and understandingly. In this temper of mind I earnestly sought after the Lord, applying myself to hear sermons, and read the best books I could meet with, but especially the scriptures, which were very sweet and savoury to me; yea, I very earnestly desired and pressed after the knowledge of the scriptures, but was much afraid of receiving men's interpretations of them, or of fastening any interpretation upon them myself; but waited much, and prayed much, that from the Spirit of the Lord I might receive the true understanding of them, and that he would chiefly endue me with that knowledge, which I might feel sanctifying and saving. And indeed I did sensibly receive of his love, of his mercy, and of his grace, which I felt still freely to move towards me, and at seasons when I was most filled with the sense of my own unworthiness, and had least expectations of the manifestation of them. But I was exceedingly entangled about election and reprobation, (having drunk in that doctrine, according as it was then held forth by the strictest of those that were termed Puritans, and as then seemed to be very manifest and positive from Rom. ix. &c.) fearing lest, notwithstanding all my desires and seekings after the Lord, he might in his decree have passed me by; and I felt it would be bitter to me to bear his wrath, and be separated from his love for evermore; yet, if he had so

decreed, it would be, and I should (notwithstanding these fair beginnings and hopes) fall away and perish at the last. In this great trouble and grief, (which was much added to by not finding the Spirit of God so in me and with me, as I had read and believed the former Christians had it) and in mourning over and grappling with secret corruptions and temptations, I spent many years, and fell into great weakness of body; and often casting myself upon my bed, did wring my hands and weep bitterly, begging earnestly of the Lord, daily, that I might be pitied by him, and helped against my enemies, and be made conformable to the image of his Son, by his own renewing power. And indeed at last (when my nature was almost spent, and the pit of despair was even closing its mouth upon me) mercy sprang, and deliverance came, and the Lord my God owned me, and sealed his love unto me, and light sprang within me, which made not only the scriptures, but the very outward creatures glorious in my eye, so that every thing was sweet and pleasant and lightsome round about me. But I soon felt, that this estate was too high and glorious for me, and I was not able to abide in it, it so overcame my natural spirits; wherefore, blessing the name of the Lord for his great goodness to me, I prayed unto him to take that from me which I was not able to bear, and to give me such a proportion of his light and presence, as was suitable to my present state, and might fit me for his service. Whereupon this was presently removed from me; yet a savour

remained with me, wherein I had sweetness, and comfort, and refreshment for a long season. But my mind did not then know how to turn to and dwell with that which gave me the savour, nor rightly to read what God did daily write in my heart, which sufficiently manifested itself to be of him, by its living virtue and pure operation upon me; but I looked upon the scriptures to be my rule, and so would weigh the inward appearances of God to me by what was outwardly written, and durst not receive any thing from God immediately, as it sprang from the fountain, but only in that mediate way. Herein did I limit the Holy One of Israel, and exceedingly hurt my own soul, as I afterwards felt and came to understand. Yet the Lord was tender to me, and condescended exceedingly, opening scriptures to me, freshly every day, teaching and instructing, warming and comforting my heart thereby; and truly he did help me to pray, and to believe, and to love him and his appearances in any; yea, to love all the sons of men, and all his creatures, with a true love. But that in me which knew not the appearances of the Lord in my spirit, but would limit him to words of scriptures formerly written, that proceeded yet further, and would be raising a fabrick of knowledge out of the scriptures, and gathering a perfect rule (as I thought) concerning my heart, my words, my ways, my worship; and according to what I thus drank in (after this manner, from the scriptures) I practised, and with much seriousness of spirit and prayer to God fell a helping to build up

an Independent congregation, wherein the savour of life and the presence of God was fresh with me, as I believe there are yet some alive of that congregation can testify.

This was my state, when I was smitten, broken, and distressed by the Lord, confounded in my worship, confounded in my knowledge, stripped of all in one day, (which it is hard to utter) and was matter of amazement to all that beheld me. I lay open and naked to all that would inquire of me, and strive to search out what might be the cause the Lord should deal so with me. They would at first be jealous that I had sinned and provoked him so to do; but when they had scanned things thoroughly, and I had opened my heart nakedly to them, I do not remember any one that ever retained that sense concerning me. My soul remembereth the wormwood and gall, the exceeding bitterness of that state, and is still humbled in me in the remembrance of it before the Lord. Oh! how did I wish with Job, that I might come before him, and bowingly plead with him; for indeed I had no sense of any guilt upon me, but was sick of love towards him, and as one violently rent from the bosom of his beloved! Oh! how gladly would I have met with death! For I was weary all the day long, and afraid of the night, and weary also of the night season, and afraid of the ensuing day. I remember my grievous and bitter mournings to the Lord; how often did I say, *O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? Why hast thou broken me to pieces? I had no delight but thee, no desire after any but thee.*

My heart was bent wholly to serve thee, and thou hast even fitted me (as appeared to my sense) *by many deep exercises and experiences for thy service; why dost thou make me thus miserable?* Sometimes I would cast mine eye upon a scripture, and my heart would even melt within me; at other times I would desire to pray to my God, as I had formerly done; but I found I knew him not, and I could not tell how to pray, or in any wise to come near him, as I had formerly done. In this condition I wandered up and down from mountain to hill, from one sort to another, with a cry in my spirit, *Can ye tell news of my beloved? Where doth he dwell? Where doth he appear?* But their voices were still strange to me, and I should retire sad and oppressed, and bowed down in spirit, from them.

Now surely, all serious, sober, sensible people, will be ready to inquire, how I came satisfyingly to know the Lord at length; or whether I do yet certainly know him, and am yet truly satisfied?

Yes indeed, I am satisfied at my very heart. Truly my heart is united to him whom I longed after, in an everlasting covenant of pure life and peace.

Well then, how came this about? will some say. Why thus: The Lord opened my spirit, the Lord gave me the certain and sensible feeling of the pure seed, which had been with me from the beginning; the Lord caused his holy power to fall upon me, and gave me such an inward demonstration and feeling of the seed of life, that I cried out in my spirit, *This*

is he, this is he; there is not another, there never was another. He was always near me, though I knew him not (not so sensibly, not so distinctly, as now he was revealed in me and to me by the Father); *Oh! that I might now be joined to him, and he alone might live in me.* And so in the willingness which God had wrought in me, (in this day of his power to my soul) I gave up to be instructed, exercised, and led by him, in the waiting for and feeling of his holy seed, that all might be wrought out of me which could not live with the seed, but would be hindering the dwelling and reigning of the seed in me, while it remained and had power. And so I have gone through a sore travail, and fight of afflictions and temptations, of many kinds; wherein the Lord hath been merciful to me in helping me, and preserving the spark of life in me, in the midst of many things which had befallen me, whose nature tended to quench and extinguish it.

Now thus having met with the true way, and walked with the Lord therein, wherein daily certainty, yea, and full assurance of faith and of understanding is at length obtained; I cannot be silent, (true love and pure life stirring in me and moving me) but am necessitated to testify of it to others; and this is it, To retire inwardly, and wait to feel somewhat of the Lord, somewhat of his Holy Spirit and power, discovering and drawing from that which is contrary to him, and into his holy nature and heavenly image. And then, as the mind is joined to this, somewhat

is received, some true life, some true light, some true discerning; which the creature not exceeding (but abiding in the measure of) is safe; but it is easy erring from this, but hard abiding with it, and not going before its leadings. But he that feels life, and begins in life, doth he not begin safely? And he that waits, and fears, and goes on no further than his Captain goes before him, doth he not proceed safely? Yea, very safely, even till he cometh to be so settled and established in the virtue, demonstration, and power of truth, as nothing can prevail to shake him. Now, blessed be the Lord, there are many at this day, who can truly and faithfully witness, that they have been brought by the Lord to this state. And thus have we learned of the Lord; to wit, not by the high, striving, aspiring mind; but by lying low, and being contented with a little. If but a crumb of bread, (yet if bread) if but a drop of water, (yet if water) we have been contented with it, and also thankful to the Lord for it; nor by thoughtfulness, and wise searching and deep considering with our own wisdom and reason have we obtained it; but in the still, meek, and humble waiting, have we found that brought into the death, which is not to know the mysteries of God's kingdom, and that which is to live, made alive and increase in life.

Therefore he that would truly know the Lord, let him take heed of his own reason and understanding. I tried this way very far; for I considered most seriously and uprightly;

I prayed, I read the scriptures, I earnestly desired to understand and find out whether that, which this people, called QUAKERS, testified of, was the only way and truth of God (as they seemed to me but to pretend); but, for all this, prejudices multiplied upon me, and strong reasonings against them, which appeared to me as unanswerable. But when the Lord revealed his seed in me, and touched my heart therewith, which administered true life and virtue to me, I presently felt them there the children of the Most High, and so grown up in his life, power, and holy dominion, (as the inward eye, being opened by the Lord, sees) as drew forth from me great reverence of heart, and praises to the Lord, who had so appeared among men in these latter days. And as God draweth, in any respect, oh! give up in faithfulness to him! Despise the shame, take up the cross; for indeed it is a way which is very cross to man, and which his wisdom will exceedingly be ashamed of; but that must be denied and turned from, and the secret sensible drawings of God's Spirit waited for and given up to. Mind, people: He that will come into the new covenant, must come into the obedience of it. The light of life, which God hath hid in the heart, is the covenant; and from this covenant God doth not give knowledge to satisfy the vast, aspiring, comprehending wisdom of man; but living knowledge, to feed that which is quickened by him; which knowledge is given in the obedience, and is very sweet and precious to the state of him that knows how

to feed upon it. Yea, truly, this is of a very excellent, pure, precious nature, and a little of it weighs down that great vast knowledge in the comprehending part, which the man's spirit and nature so much prizeth and presseth after. And truly, friends, I witness at this day a great difference between the sweetness of comprehending the knowledge of things, as expressed in the scriptures, (this I fed much on formerly) and tasting the hidden life, the hidden manna in the heart (which is my food now, blessed for ever be the Lord my God and Saviour.) Oh! that others had a true, certain, and sensible taste of the life, virtue, and goodness of the Lord, as it is revealed there! Surely, it could not but kindle the true hunger, and inflame the true thirst; which can never be satisfied but by the true bread, and by water from the living fountain. This the Lord (in the tenderness of his love, and in the riches of his grace and mercy) hath brought us to; and this we earnestly and uprightly desire and endeavour, that others may be brought to also; that they may rightly (in the true silence of the flesh, and in the pure stillness of spirit) wait for, and in the Lord's due time receive, that which answers the desire of the awakened mind and soul, and satisfies it with the true precious substance for evermore, *Amen*.

OF CERTAINTY, AND RIGHTLY-GROUNDED ASSURANCE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

THERE is a witness of and from God in every conscience; which, in his light, power, and authority, witnesseth for him, and against that which is contrary to him, as he pleaseth to move upon it, visiting and drawing the hearts of the sons of men by it.

From this witness proceeds the true and well-grounded religion in the mind towards God: for this witness both testifieth and demonstrateth that there is a God, and also inclineth the mind to desire and seek after the right knowledge and true worship of him.

And such who keep to this witness, and wait upon God therein, are taught by it the true spiritual worship; the true and pure fear of the Most High; the faith which he giveth to his saints; the love which is chaste and unfeigned; the hope which purifieth the mind, and anchors it on the eternal rock; the meekness, patience, gentleness, humility, &c. which is not of man's nature, but the gift of God, and the nature of the heavenly Giver.

And then for exercises of religion, as praying to the Father of spirits, hearing the heavenly voice, reading in the Spirit, and with the renewed understanding, singing and making melody in the heart (and also with the voice) to the Lord, as his life is felt, and the spiritual blessings and treasure received; all these, and whatever else is judged necessary for the soul, are taught by this witness of God in the

conscience, as the soul groweth up in the light, Spirit, nature, and holy power thereof.

But now, when the Lord reacheth to his witness in men, and is teaching their hearts by it, then the enemy, the other spirit, whose seat is in the other part, keepeth a noise there, to overbear the voice of the witness, and to make men take up religion in another part, which is shallow, and reacheth not to the depth and weight of truth, which is in the witness of God, and which the witness of God gives to them that come thither.

Thus the enemy stirreth up reasonings, imaginations, and consultations about God, and his worship; wherein he raiseth up the vain shallow mind, forging and bringing forth somewhat pleasing and suitable to the earthly understanding; taking up the mind therewith, and engaging the heart in some such practices therefrom, as may quiet and satisfy that part in men. For the ways that men take up in their reasonings and understandings, satisfy their reasonings and understandings; and so they walk in the light of the sparks, and warm themselves by the fire of their own kindling; but all this answers not the witness of God in them, nor will be approved by his light in their own consciences, when it comes again to be revealed and made manifest in them.

This was the ground of the error both of the Jews and Gentiles.

The Gentiles were enlightened by God with his true light; what might be known of God (suitable to their state and capacity) being manifested in them; insomuch as it is witness-

ed concerning them in the scriptures (which are a true record and testimony) that they knew God. But when they knew him, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and so their foolish heart was darkened concerning him: and they worshipped him not as the witness taught them he was to be worshipped, not according to the manifestation of his light in them; but according to their own foolish imaginations and reasonings, which taught them to make images of him, and so to worship him in and through creatures, according to their own inventions; which is not the true worship. Rom. i. 21, 22, 23.

So likewise the Jews, not keeping to the manifestation of his light within them, (to the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses directed them) which would have taught and enabled them to have kept to the law of the letter without them; they also ran into the nature and spirit of the heathen, and fell into imaginings and reasonings, which led them to worship like them; insomuch that they also changed their glory into the image of an ox that eateth grass. Ps. cvi. 20.

Now from this part in man ariseth all the uncertainty, and doubts, and dissatisfaction about religion. And hence arise the opinions, and judgments, and reasonings, in the minds of men: yea, indeed, the best of men's religion here is but an opinion or judgment, which the breath of God's Spirit will shake and dissolve every where, sooner or later. All flesh is

grass; and all the beauty of men's knowledge, religion, and worship here, will wither like grass. All the buildings and churches that are raised here (how beautiful soever) are but Babylon, built by man's understanding, by man's knowledge, by man's comprehension, by man's wisdom, by man's skill, and indeed in man's will and time, and their standing, beauty, strength and glory, is but from man, and in man's day, and will fade away like a flower.

But the true certainty is in the day of God, from the light of his Spirit shining into man's spirit, from God's inward reaching to his heart by his power, and testifying his truth there. And this all the powers of darkness cannot prevail against in itself; no, nor against that man that is kept to it. For it is the rock (the only rock) upon which the whole church is built, and which cannot fail to preserve every member of the church which is built upon it,

SOME DIRECTIONS TO THE PANTING SOUL,

Which hath been long travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly so much as entered into the Ministration of the endless Life (which is the Ministration of the GOSPEL) that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living Waters.

MAT. xi. 28, 29, 30.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy "laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke "upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and "lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your "souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is "light."

SOME sweet meditations sprang in my heart concerning this portion of scripture; with breathings of spirit for, and rollings of bowels towards, those "that labour, and are heavy laden," which I find drawings to communicate.

1. *In the gospel* (which is "the power of God unto salvation") *is the soul's rest.* It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlasting rest to the soul in God. The law had the shadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the possession of the good things themselves, but only a labouring after them, and a mourning and load because of the want of them: but in the gospel is the substance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and

an entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where they are felt, possessed and enjoyed. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," saith the forerunner: It is come, saith the Messiah: and in it there is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the pure Spirit of life.

2. *It is the will of the King of saints that his people should enjoy the rest and peace of his gospel.* He would not have them always labouring and heavy laden, as under the law; but he would have their souls feel and enjoy the ease, the liberty, the sweetness, the pure power and eternal rest of his life. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach glad tidings to the meek, liberty to the captives, life to the dead, the opening of the prison to the prisoner of hope, the binding up of the broken-hearted, the pouring in of oil upon the wounded: and he would have the souls of his people enjoy that which he came to bring them.

3. *Christ hath plainly chalked out the path of his rest to every weary panting soul, which he that walketh in cannot miss of.* He hath *cast up, cast up;* he hath *made the way plain* in the gospel, so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the gospel, cannot err therein, or miss of the blessed rest thereof. How is it? Why "come unto me; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." He that walketh in this path cannot miss of it: the rest is at the end of it, nay, the rest is in it: "he that believeth entereth into the rest." The true faith, the faith which stands in the power, and which is given to the birth which is born from above, is the sub-

stance of the rest hoped for, and there is a true taste and some enjoyment of it given to him that truly believeth.

4. *The rest was once felt and enjoyed, when the gospel was known in power.* Believers, in the first day of the gospel, before the night overtook that glorious dispensation, found "peace and joy in believing;" yea, they could rejoice in the Lord always. They felt the power and the life, which stood over all the powers of darkness, and brought good to them out of every affliction, and out of every temptation, and out of every distress: so that they standing in the life, and in the power which had quickened them, and was present with them, they could "count it all joy when they fell into manifold temptations," knowing the advantage which would accrue to them thereby, and possessing their souls in the pure patience, till God wrought it out for them. *They had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom: they received the kingdom which could not be shaken, and in it had fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and in the eternal light the blood ran in their vessels, which cleansed them, and kept them pure; and they sat down with Christ in the heavenly places, even every one in the particular mansion which God had built in them by his Spirit. The fear of the living God was put in their hearts; the Spirit of the Lord was within them, and there his law was written, and read in the Spirit, and the treasures of his kingdom were opened by the key of David in the hand of the Spirit; and their souls had*

true satisfaction and rest in measure, and were travelling on towards the fulness.

5. *There is no rest to the soul to be enjoyed in the gospel from under the yoke.* This stands eternally: that which yokes down that which would be at ease and liberty out of the life, that is the soul's true rest; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwise; only when that which is to be yoked down is consumed and destroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty. But the same thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the sweetness, the ease, the lightsomeness, the safe possession of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the same. The power of God, the life everlasting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the transgressing nature; but it is the ease, the pleasure, the rest, the peace, the joy, the natural center of that which is born of God.

Now to the soul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after his living presence, and after the feeling of his eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to say: *Where art thou? Art thou in thy soul's rest? Dost thou feel the virtue and power of the gospel? Dost thou feel the ease which comes from the living arm, to the heart which is joined to it in the light of the gospel? Is thy labouring for life in a good degree at an end? And dost thou feel the life and power flowing in upon*

thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Dost thou find the captive redeemed and set free from the power of sin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal? Hast thou found this, or hast thou missed of it? Let thine heart answer. Ah! do not imagine and talk away the rest and salvation of thy soul. The gospel-state is a state of substance, a state of enjoying the life, a state of feeling the presence and power of the Lord in his pure Holy Spirit, a state of binding-up, a state of healing, a state of knowing the Lord, and walking with him in the light of his own Spirit. It begins in a sweet powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the rest, peace, and satisfaction of the soul in God) to be administered and waited for daily. Now art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the spring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, sapless, or at best but unsatisfiedly mourning after what thou wantest?

Well, ye that are dry, dead, barren, as it were without the living God, (that know not the shining of his sun, nor the descending of his dews from on high on his tender plants, nor the care, diligence, and circumspection of the husbandman over his husbandry) oh! wait for the quickening virtue, for the visitations of the day-spring from on high! that ye may

be quickened again to God, that ye may find his life visiting you, his Spirit breathing upon you, that the seed of Jacob may be raised in you to travel out of this barren state, even out of this land of darkness, and from under the shadow of death, to the land where life lives and flourishes, and daily distributeth plentiful nourishment and refreshment to all its offspring, who are taught to wait for it, and to feed on it in the holy place, out of the sight of the eye of the fleshly wisdom.

And ye who are still gasping after the living God, on whom the breathings of life still abide; who remain unsatisfied inwardly for want of the presence of the Lord, and whose hearts still mourn and lament deeply after him, oh! consider what is the matter, that ye have mourned so long, and sought so long, and yet to this day are at a distance from the thing ye have mourned for and sought after!

"Strait is the gate, narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The way of unbelief is broad, yea, the way of belief is broad also. It is easy for a man so to believe concerning Christ, or in Christ, (as his heart may call it) as to miss of the nature of the true faith, and of the sweet and blessed effects which accompany it. It is easy likewise to miss the yoke, (to take up a wrong yoke, in the self-will, self-wisdom, self-interpretation of scriptures) or easy starting aside from the true yoke; but it is hard coming under the yoke of the life, and hard abiding under it. Again, it is easy mis-learning: a man may so read, and so hear, as that he

may be always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; never come to the truth as it is received and held in Jesus; but may so get and hold the knowledge of the truth, as man in his wisdom may get and hold it from the letter. And if a man thus miss the way, how can he attain the end? If a man begin not in the true faith, in the living faith, how can he attain the rest which the true faith alone leads to? If a man miss of the yoke, or abide not constantly under the yoke, how can he meet with the true ease and rest which is in it, and which it alone can administer? If a man learn not the truth aright of the true teacher, how can he ever reap the effects of the true knowledge? Ah! poor hearts! it is not enough to have breathings after God, nor to be very diligent and industrious, either in outward ordinances, or inward exercises of spirit; but the way of the gospel must be cast up by God, and the soul led into it by him, and daily preserved by him, and must walk in the path which is proper for it to walk in, or it may mourn and cry all its days, and never meet with that enjoyment of God, and satisfaction in God, which it waits for, and cries after. It is one thing to mourn after a gospel-state, but another thing to be brought into it by the power. With my heart I own those that mourn after and feel the want of God, wherever they are; but this I know certainly, that they can never come to the enjoyment of him, but in that living path which the scriptures testify of to be in him who is the life, and which his Spirit is

now found manifestly leading into. Blessed be his name!

Quest. *But how may my poor soul, who have long mourned, and groaned, and been sick of love after my beloved, but could never attain to the satisfactory enjoyment of him, come to walk in his path, that so I may meet with, and lie down in, the power of life and salvation which the gospel holds forth to the true believer, and which I have been long sensible of the deep want of?*

Ans. Thou that wouldst enjoy thy beloved, and feel the rest of his gospel, and walk in that path which leads thereto, wait to learn of the Spirit these things following:

1. *Know what it is that is to walk in the path of life, and indeed is alone capable of walking therein.* It is that which groans, and which mourns; that which is begotten of God in thee. The path of life is for the seed of life. The true knowledge of the way, with the walking in the way, is reserved for God's child, for God's traveller. Therefore keep in the regeneration, keep in the birth; be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion. And as thou takest up

the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlasting inheritance in that.

2. *Know in what light it is to walk*, which is in the light of the Spirit. There the child is begotten, (not in Satan's darkness, or highest transformings into the likeness of light, which is but darkness; nor in the light of man's wisdom, searching knowledge, or comprehension) and there it walks: in that light it fetcheth every step and motion towards the land of life; therefore hold no knowledge out of the Spirit. If any knowledge concerning the things of God be held out of the freshness of the Spirit, it presently proves dead and unprofitable. The spiritual Israel cannot travel without a spiritual light; which light is eternal and incomprehensible, and cannot be held by man's spirit, but shineth fresh in the renewed spirit every day, and so is daily gathering it more and more inward into itself, comprehending it in itself, and preserving it in its own purity, clearness, and brightness. Oh! this is it hath undone many, even catching at light from the Spirit, transplanting the image of divine things into the earthly principle, and there holding of them in the earthly part, growing wise by them there, and making use of them from thence as man sees good, and not seeing a necessity of depending on the Spirit for fresh light and life every day to every spiritual motion. Thus the traveller soon comes to lose the true path, and instead thereof travels on in a road of his own wisdom's forming: and so

though he seems to himself to make a large progress, yet makes no true progress at all, but is exceedingly run out aside in a by-way; all which ground he must traverse back again, ere he can come to the truth of his former state, or proceed in the true travel.

3. *Know and keep to the power*, which alone began any true work in the heart, which alone also can preserve it, and which alone can carry it on. Christ was made a priest, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life:* and every sacrificer under him (which every true believer is) is so made by the same power. The powers of darkness are continually at hand, which nothing can stand its ground against (much less walk on safely) without being in that power which is above them. The first coming to Christ must be in the power of the Father's drawing: and no believing afterwards is of the true nature, nor will avail the soul in its progress and travels towards life, but what abides in, and goeth forth in the same power. So the taking up the yoke, and drawing in it, must be by the power of the new life; and so must the disciple's learning be. As the master teacheth in the power of the Spirit the things which alone can be seen with the new eye, heard with the new ear, and received into the new heart; so the scholar must learn and receive his lessons of life in the same power. Let any disciple of Christ be from under the shadow of the power, believe out of the power, walk out of the power, act out of the power, he is from that wherein his life stands, and wherein alone

is his preservation; and ah! how liable is he then to falls, bruises, snares, and temptations of the enemy.

4. *Watch against the selfish wisdom*, in every step of thy growth, and in every spiritual motion, that that come not between thee and thy life; that that deceive thee not with a likeness, a shadow, making it appear more pleasing to the eye than the substance. Every step of thy way it will be laying baits for thee; and it is easy for deceit to enter thee at any time, and for that wisdom to get up in thee under an appearance of spiritual wisdom, unless the Lord tenderly and powerfully preserve thee: and if it prevail, it will lead thee from the path of the true wisdom; it will cozen thee with a false faith, instead of the true faith; with false praying, instead of the breathings of the true child; with diligence and zeal in thy false way, instead of the true zeal and diligence; yea, it will hurry thee on in the path of error, shutting that eye in thee which should see, and hardening thine heart against thy bosom friend. And being thus deceived, thou mayest be as zealous in thy age and generation against the truth, as the Jews were in theirs: and as certainly as they put Christ to death, and persecuted his apostles, though they cried up the former prophets, so certainly thou (under this deceit) canst not but act against the present dispensation and appearance of Christ's Spirit, and would persecute either the prophets, apostles, or Christ himself, were it their present day now so to appear as formerly they did.

5. *Let nothing judge in thee* (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God) *but only the begotten of God* in the heart. Let the light in which thou art begotten to God, and which shines upon his begotten, be the only judge in thee, and then thou canst not err in judgment. Be not hasty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, still waiting for the appearance and openings of the life. A few steps fetched in the life and power of God are much safer and sweeter than an hasty progress in the hasty forward spirit.

Indeed this is the true religion, to feel God beginning the work, and to wait on him for his carrying it on. The feeling of God's Spirit beginning somewhat in the heart, the heart's waiting on him for more of his Spirit, and walking on with him in his Spirit, as he pleaseth to quicken, lead, draw, and strengthen; this is the spiritual and true religion: and there is no duty or ordinance of the gospel out of the Spirit; but it is easy crying up and observing the likeness of any of them out of the Spirit, into which observance a strange spirit easily enters; and then that which was of God in the heart soon withers, and a contrary building is raised, and the state of the heart changed. Oh! wait on the Lord, that he may give you to understand these things; for the apostacy from God is very deep, and more provoking among the Protestants than among the Papists, yea, most of all provoking where it is most inward and spiritual.

Quest. *But how may I know and keep to the begotten of God, and to the light and power of the Lord, and keep down the fleshly wisdom and comprehension concerning the things of God?*

Ans. When God begets life in the heart, there is a savour of it in thy vessel, and a secret living warmth and virtue, which the heart in some measure feels, whereby it is known. Lie low in the fear of the Most High, that this leaven may grow and increase in thee. This is the leaven of the kingdom; this is it which must change thy heart and nature, and make thy vessel (which perhaps hath been long and much corrupted) fit to receive the treasure of the kingdom. Now while the savour is upon thee, while the virtue of the life is fresh in thee, thou findest some strength towards God, with some little taste and discerning of the things of his kingdom. Know thy weakness, and go not beyond thy measure; but in what thou hast received bow before the fulness, worship God in that, and be patient in what he exercises thee withal, waiting for more from him. And when the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loss, missing the savour and presence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and still, and thou wilt find breathings after a fresh visitation, and a meek, humble, broken spirit before the Lord. Thou wilt see thou canst do nothing to recover his presence again; nay, thou canst not so much as wait for him, or breathe after him, without his help; but he is nigh to the poor, nigh to

the broken, nigh to the distressed, nigh to the helpless. Oh! do not with thy fleshly cries and roarings think to awaken thy beloved before his season; but in the night of distress, feel after somewhat which may quiet and stay thy heart till the next springing of the day. The sun will arise, which will scatter the clouds; and he is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou shalt yet see God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of his Spirit. And in the day of his power thou wilt find strength to walk with him; yea, in the day of thy weakness his grace will be sufficient for thee; and he will nurture thee up in his life by his pure Spirit, causing thee to grow under his shadow; and he will be teaching thee to live, and to speak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compass of his light and life eternal. Only be not wise to catch the notion of things into the earthly part, where the moth can corrupt, and where the thief can break through and steal; but know the divine treasury, where all the things of life are treasured up by the Spirit, and handed forth to the living child with fresh life, according to its need of them. And thus thy heart being kept close to God, and thy spiritual senses continually exercised about the things of God, it will be easy to thee to know the Shepherd's voice, and to distinguish the sound of the Spirit in thine own heart: and that which tries spirits and motions in thine own heart, will also give thee the discerning of truth and error abroad, even of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan

in others; so that thou wilt be able to try not only words, but spirits, becoming acquainted with the anointing, which savours all things, and will give thee to judge, not by the words, but by the power: for thou thyself being in the power, in the anointing, in the savour, it will become natural to thee to feel, to taste, to know, and unite with what is one with thy life, what comes from the same Spirit in others, and to turn from the contrary. And thus thy life, thy growth, thy path will be sweet, safe, clear, certain, demonstrative in the Spirit, and past all reasonings of flesh and blood, either in thyself or others. The beginning of life eternal is in an higher principle than man can come at. Man's wisdom and knowledge of the things of God is but brutish before it. As thou comest into that principle, abidest and growest in that principle, thou art beyond man's judgment, and art able to judge man, and fathom his whole course as with a span; but art quite out of his reach in the lowest of thy motions, thoughts, or actions; I mean such as flow from, and are comprehended in, the life.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

[The following Piece succeeds an Address "To such as are not satisfied with a Profession."]

A QUERY, WITH ITS ANSWER.

WHAT IS THE TRUE CONFESSION OF CHRIST, even that Confession which ariseth from the knowledge which is life eternal?

Ans. FRIENDS, I witness it to be this; A confession of his nature, a confession of his Spirit, a confession of his life, a confession of his power. To confess the present living appearance of Christ, that is to confess Christ. "Behold," saith he, "I stand at the door and knock." He that heareth his voice, acknowledgeth him, letteth him in, subjecteth to his truth and Holy Spirit; he confesseth him. But, though a man should acknowledge and confess all that is recorded in the scriptures concerning him; yet if he know not his knocks, so as to let him in, and become subject to his power, he doth not confess Christ as he ought to do, and as God requireth of him. Oh! that ye could learn thus to know Christ, and thus to confess him! For until ye thus know him, ye cannot thus confess him! and your knees must first bow at his name, before your tongues can rightly confess him, to the glory of God the Father! For if ye will indeed glorify the Father, ye must bow to the Son, who is the light wherein God dwells, in the shinings whereof he appears to, and visits the sons of men. And as the Son himself is spiritual; so

is the light wherewith he visits dark man. His law is spiritual, able to convert the soul of any man in whose heart it is written, and to make wise (the most simple among men) unto salvation. For the law of God, writ in the heart, is from the covenant of life; and delivers and preserves from the law of sin and death, having the light, power, and Spirit of Christ in and with it, from whom it comes.

Now if ye will know these things clearly, certainly, and infallibly; wait to feel some touches, some drawings, some convictions of God's Spirit upon your hearts. And then dispute not against them; but immediately become subject, so far as the light and drawings of the Father incline and lead the mind; and then ye shall see what he is that draws, and of what nature his drawings are. And if once ye come to feel the preciousness of his ointment; and to partake of it, receiving it and following it, it will bring you into the pure virginity, which loves and longs after the name that anoints with the pure living oil.

Friends, I was once where ye now are; and in that day, I also (through error and mistake) called the light wherewith Christ hath enlightened man, *natural*, as ye now do. But the Lord hath since shewed me, that it was not the true birth of life in me which so called it; and it is also manifested to me in his Spirit of truth, (which deceives not) that it is not the true birth in you, which so judges of it. Oh! that ye were born of the Spirit, and in it knew the names of the things from their nature, and might be taught of the Father to

worship in the Son! which ye can never do, till ye come into the Son's light; and that is the Son's light, even that wherewith he hath enlightened men, that they might believe in the Father through him! The scriptures (or any words spoken or written) are not the light itself, but testimonies concerning the light. Now that which ye are to come into, and to dwell and abide in, is the light itself; which light was before any words that testify of it, and is the substance of all the shadows, and the end of all the testimonies concerning it. He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End of the new creation of God. Oh! that ye so knew him!

[Yet that which the scriptures testify concerning Christ is exactly true according as it is there related, and is so acknowledged and really owned by us; though we obtained not our knowledge of Christ by the letter, but by receiving a principle of life from God; and coming into union with his Spirit, we came to the true knowledge and owning of the letter; which as it came from the life, so can it only be rightly read and understood in the life from which it came: so that he that is out of that, cannot but err concerning the letter, and misjudge concerning the things of God; whereas he that is guided by, and lives in, God's Spirit, (receiving his knowledge there) cannot err concerning the Spirit, or concerning the letter; but hath that within him, which gives to him, and preserves him in, the true sense and understanding of both.]....VOL. 3. p. 85.

That from which the scriptures came, is the thing, the life, the Spirit, the power itself; which is able to write inwardly, as well as outwardly. And he that knows the thing, and is led to the thing by the inward writing, (which is the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy) he by the testimony of Jesus, by the Spirit of prophecy, is led to the Holy Power; which he believing in, it prevails to save him out of the contrary spirit and power. And this the Gentiles without the law, the Jews under the law, and the believers under grace, had spiritually all one and the same way and path of life unto salvation; and God will be clear and just in judging them all according thereunto, who had all some manifestation of the gospel and power which saves, according to the dispensation of the good pleasure of the free giver. And men's perishing in the time of every dispensation, is not for want of light and power from God, but from men's withdrawing and apostatizing from the light and power, which in every dispensation of life stretched forth its hand and arm sufficiently to gather and save.

THERE is one thing more in my heart unto you at this time, which is

CONCERNING APPLYING THE PROMISES.

The Promises of God are great and precious, and give to partake of the divine nature those that wait upon the Lord in the faith and

obedience of his truth. Now there are estates and conditions to which they do belong; and there are estates and conditions to which they do not belong: and if any one apply any promise to himself, he not being in that estate and condition to which that promise belongs, he deceives his soul, and sucks not in the true sweetness and comfort of the promise, but of his own imaginary apprehensions concerning the promise.

There is a state of wounding, of judging, of God's pleading with the soul, because of sin and transgression. Now he that breaks and wounds, he alone can bind up and heal; and the Lord is to be waited upon in the way of his judgments, until he see meet to bind up and heal. Now the Lord heals by the same Spirit and power wherewith he wounds; but it is hard to lie under the judgment, to bear the indignation of the Lord, and so keep the wound (which he makes) open, till he pour in the oil, and heal. For there is that near, which will be offering to heal before the season, and will be bringing in promises, and applying promises, otherwise than the Spirit of the Lord intendeth or applieth them. Now this is diligently to be watched against, that the hurt of the soul (judged and wounded by the Spirit of the Lord) be not healed slightly, and peace spoken to it (and an expectation and hope raised in it) which is not of the Lord. But this is the right way, even to give up to feel that which wounds, and to receive the woundings of thy soul's friend, and lie low before him in the wounded state, waiting upon him in the

way of his judgments and righteous indignation; till the same that wounded, speak peace. For the same is to speak peace, and not another; "I the Lord wound, and I heal; I kill, "and I make alive." "Judgment is mine, and "mercy is mine; and they both issue from my "lips." (See Isa. xii. 1.) So every one, that would not be deceived about, nor misapply the promises, wait to feel that in you, which leads into the condition to which the promise belongs, and to be led into and kept in the condition by it. And then, the same that leads into the condition, will apply the promise to him who is in the condition, the ear being open to him, hearkening to the Lord, waiting what he will speak, who speaks peace to his people in his seasons; and having the ear shut against the voice of the unrighteous troubler of the souls of God's heritage. Yea, he that applieth the promises to the soul, (having brought it into the state to which they belong) he also will lead and bring unto the fulfilling of the promises, even to the receiving of the good things promised and waited for; so that the soul shall witness the gospel to be a glorious, state indeed; a state of life, a state of liberty, a state of power, a state of dominion, a state of holiness, a kingdom of righteousness and peace, wherein there are everlasting mansions and dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, for the seed of the righteous for evermore. The Lord God of everlasting mercy, life, power, and rich goodness, cause the light of his own Holy Spirit to shine into your hearts, guide you thereby into and in the true way, even in the

pure living path, (which was and is but one for ever) that ye may come into the true possession, and full enjoyment, and infallible witnessing of these things.

23d of the Second Month, 1668.

THERE is another QUERY, of great Concernment, which springeth up in my Heart towards you.

Query. Is not the Spirit, or anointing, the great gospel-promise, and the great gospel-ordinance? Is not he *truth, and no lie*, and the leader out of all lies and deceits into the truth, and the preserver of the mind and spirit therein? "Little children," said the same apostle, who had directed to the anointing, "keep yourselves from idols." Is there any possibility of being kept from images and idols, but by him? Can any understand the things of the Spirit, or the words spoken by the Spirit concerning spiritual things, but by him? And then, is not every apprehension, that ye take up from the scriptures concerning spiritual things, which ye have not from him, (but comprehend and gather of yourselves) an image, or conceiving of your own, concerning that thing, and not that true knowledge and understanding of the thing which he alone can give? Oh! that all the chambers of imagery were thrown down in you, and every idol of the heart and mind discovered to you, and broken down by the light and power of the Lord; that ye might come to that which is pure and

living, and by its purifying know the pure heart, the pure mind, the pure conscience, and offer up the pure perfect offering; not the lame, blind, imperfect, &c. which were not accepted (in the figure) under the law, nor acceptable under the gospel. Mal. i. 11, 13, and chap. iii. 3.

Friends, ye must know that which is pure from God, and ye must come into it (out of that which is impure, into that which is pure.) Now that ye may do so, ye must know the purifying; for nothing that is impure, can enter into that which is pure. Yea, ye must become priests to God, and wear the priest's garment, the pure garment, the living garment, the fine linen, without mixture of the woollen. Ye must be born of the innocency, be clothed with the innocency. The stony, hard, desperately-wicked heart must be taken away, and the tender heart of flesh received, the mind renewed to God, the fear put within, (which cleanseth and keepeth clean) the law writ within, the Spirit of the Lord put in the inward parts, and felt powerfully operating and changing there. Yea, and the inside must not only be clean, but the outside also; for ye must be clothed with the Spirit, clothed with the Lamb's righteousness and holiness; and thus ye must appear before the Lord in his temple, which is the beauty of holiness, whose house holiness becomes forever; where ye are never to appear in your own filthy rags, but in the nature, Spirit, righteousness, and life of Christ. And thus ye are well-pleasing to God, even in that which is of God;

being born of that, formed of that, found in that, appearing in that. But in his own, no man can be accepted; for it is determined of God, and stands irreversible for ever, that in his own (in his own knowledge, in his own faith, in his own obedience, in his own righteousness, in his own willing and running, &c.) shall no flesh for ever be justified in his sight; but only and alone in the nature, Spirit, life, righteousness, faith, obedience, and holiness of his Son. Therefore wait for the seed, that ye may know the seed, feel the seed, the pure seed of life, the leaven of the heavenly kingdom, and may witness it arising and come in you to do the will, and you in it quickened and enabled to live to and serve the living God. And when ye know this seed, ye know Christ; and when ye receive this seed, ye receive Christ; and if it live in you, Christ lives in you; and in it (being in it, and abiding in it) are ye heirs of the life, kingdom, and power, which hath no end; and shall daily feel the promises and blessings belonging to the seed, flowing in upon your spirits. But if ye content yourselves with the knowledge of Christ, which the erring and apostatised spirit of man from the life and power may gather out of the letter of the scriptures, and feed thereon; that will not nourish you up to eternal life, but death and sin, and the gates of hell will have power over you notwithstanding that; but if ye, through the Spirit, receive power over that which is contrary to God, and through him mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Therefore wait for the manifest-

ation of the pure power of the endless life, which is now dispensed from on high, blessed be the name of the living one, and wait to know and be joined to that seed of life, wherein and whereby it is dispensed, that ye may witness Christ's kingdom come to you, and the reign of your spirits with him therein, over all that captivateth from him, loadeth the soul, boweth down and oppresseth.

A POSTSCRIPT,

CONCERNING DECEIT AND BEING DECEIVED.

THERE is that which deceives, where it is hearkened to, and there is that which is liable to be deceived by it. There is likewise that which deceiveth not; and there is also that which cannot be deceived. So likewise there is a pure fear and watching in the truth against the deceit, lest by any means it should enter and betray. As also there is a fear that is a snare, (which the true faith preserves out of) whereby many are entangled in the very bowels of deceit, even concerning those very things about which they are afraid they should be deceived. This hath been experienced by those, who have been acquainted with the Lord's precious truth, and thereby are come to know and discern the wiles and devices of Satan; who often hath quenched what the Lord hath kindled, by his stirring up a fear, lest it should not be of the Lord, but from the spirit of deceit.

It is true, that in the apostacy from the life and Spirit of truth, deceit did generally prevail and overwhelm the minds of people. And so far as people are yet in the apostacy, not being gathered and redeemed out of it, by the Spirit and power of the Lord, they are yet under deceit; though perhaps they little think so. Little did we think formerly, (and little do they think now, who are now in that state we were then in) that while we so much feared being deceived, we were already deceived, being short of the life and power of truth, which alone is able to make free and preserve from deceit. When the Lord cometh to bring to the primitive light and principle, that he might perfectly deliver out of deceit; what can the enemy do more advantageously towards keeping his hold in the mind, and towards keeping the mind in the deceits wherein he hath already entangled it, than to stir up and heighten a fear in it, lest the precious truth, which God maketh manifest to deliver the soul by, should be deceit? And they that hearken to and let in the voice of the deceiver, must needs believe it to be so. And thus with them light cometh to be called darkness, and darkness light. Yea, who is it, at this day, who escapeth this snare, of calling evil good, and good evil? Surely none but he, whose soul is led into and lives in the light and power of truth.

For most men take up principles, (according to their own, or other men's understanding of the scriptures) and judge according to those principles; and so the Spirit and light of the

Lord judgeth not in them, but they themselves judge according to an assumed knowledge. So that flesh is not silent, the man is not dead in them and brought to nothing, but only lives in an higher region than he did before. Before, he lived in an apparent unrighteousness; now he lives in an imagined righteousness and faith; but not in the Son's righteousness, not in the Son's faith, not in the Son's power, not in the Son's dominion; but at best only in that which he apprehendeth and strongly imagineth to be so.

Oh! happy is he, who is come through all his own imaginings and conceivings about the things of God, and his own apprehensions about scriptures and promises, and is come into the thing itself, into the Spirit of life, into the truth and into the power, and who walks with God therein, daily witnessing the redemption which is of him through his Son Jesus Christ, who is known and partook of in the pure quickening Spirit, and not otherwise. And he that is truly begotten of God, and dwells with him in the light which is eternal, knows that he is of God; which others may strongly imagine they are, but none else can truly know it, but may easily err and be entangled in the deceits of the enemy, (about the new birth, and other weighty things) while they are greatly afraid of being deceived by him, and so, through that fear, fly the pure truth, which frees from deceits, lest it should deceive them.

CONCERNING THE WORSHIP OF THE LIVING GOD,

WHICH HE TEACHETH ISRAEL HIS PEOPLE,

Who know him to be the Only True God, and the Worship which he teacheth them, to be the only True Spiritual Worship.

BECAUSE the *worship of God* is a weighty thing, and there have been, and still are, so many errors about it, and the errors therein are of such dangerous consequence, both in relation to men's eternal estate hereafter, and to their right constitution, peace, and welfare in this world; and because I have had deep experience concerning the *worship of God* from a child, having travelled in spirit with my God for the right knowledge thereof, and in singleness of heart giving up unto him, according as he hath taught and led my poor, needy, depending soul; I say, therefore is it on my heart, to answer some few questions concerning the *worship of God*, for the service of such as both desire and need instruction therein.

Quest. 1. *Who is the worshipper, the acceptable worshipper in the sight of God? Or whom hath God chosen out, to hold forth his worship in the sight of the world, since he rejected the Jews with their worship?*

That God hath appointed a chosen people to worship him, that I pre-suppose; though, if need were, the proof thereof might be ready at hand. It is not every man that would thrust himself upon the Lord, whom the Lord will

accept; but "the Father seeketh such to worship him." John iv. 23. There is a capacity to be found in man, to make him a worshipper; even such a capacity, as may enable him to perform that worship which God requireth of him. Now this is the thing to be inquired into; *What this capacity is, and who are the persons that are found in this capacity?*

Ans. The worshipper in the times of the gospel, the worshipper under the New Testament, is "he that is born of God." He that is drawn out of the dark spirit of this world, and formed anew in the light of God's Spirit. He that is a Jew inward, he that hath the uncircumcision of his heart cut off by the power of God; this is the worshipper, whom "the Father seeks to worship him." This is the sort of worshippers God chose, when he cast off the Jews. God did not choose any one nation, or many nations, instead of that one which he cast off; but he sent his apostles and ministers among all nations, to gather a spiritual seed, instead of the natural. And these alone are capable of setting up, and holding forth, his spiritual worship unto the world, and to provoke them to wait for, and press towards, the capacity of coming into the same spiritual worship with them.

Quest. 2. *Which is the place of worship?*

Ans. The only place of worship in the New Testament, is where the spiritual worshippers meet together. The place is spiritual. As the worship is spiritual, so is the place where it is to be offered. It hath a spiritual consideration; not outward, as under the law. It

is to be offered in the Spirit; that is the place. Where doth my soul offer its private worship to God? Hath it relation to any outward place? Or is it in the building which God hath reared up in my heart by his Spirit? Which building stands in, and is comprehended in, his Spirit. And I can offer his public worship in no other place, but in a building of the same nature, in an house built of more of the same stones. This then is the way of worshipping in the true light; divers living stones meeting together, every one retiring in spirit into the living name, into the power which begat them, they all meet in one and the same place, in one and the same power, in one and the same fountain of life; and here they bow down to the Father of life, offering up living sacrifices to him, and receiving the bread and water of life from him, and feeding in the rich pastures of his infinite fulness. In the holy city, in the living temple, which is built by God, of the stone which all other builders refuse, is the place of the worship of the living God, where the true Jews meet to offer up their spirits, souls, and bodies, a living sacrifice to the Father of life; and where they meet with such a glorious presence and power of the Father, as none but the true Jews were ever acquainted with.

Quest. 3. *What is the worship, or what are the sacrifices, which the true worshippers offer up to God in this holy place?*

Ans. The gifts of his Spirit. These they offer up, and nothing else. The breathings which the Father gives into the heart of the

child, they are breathed back unto him in the same spirit of life; in the living sense, in the quickening power. Nothing of man's wisdom, nothing of man's invention, nothing according to man's will, nothing that would please the flesh, or seem glorious in its eye, is offered up here; but the exhortations, or directions, or reproofs that spring up in God's light, in God's wisdom, they are given forth in the leadings, and by the guidance of his Spirit, and they reach to the hearts of those, to whom he pleaseth to direct them. And this is the ground of such meltings, and breakings, and convictions of soul (and such-like inward operations) as are frequently found in such assemblies. For the living God is there, and the dread of his power overspreads the hearts of such as are gathered into and assembled in his name; and the life springs in the earthern vessels, and the savour is precious to all that have their spiritual senses.

Quest. 4. *What is the season of offering up these gifts?*

Ans. The seasons of the true worship stand in the will of God. They are gifts, and the time of them stands in the will of the Giver. *Prayer* is a gift. A man cannot pray when he will; but he is to watch and to wait, when the Father will kindle in him living breathings towards himself. So the *word of God*, whether of exhortation or instruction, is a gift, which is to be waited for, and then to be given forth in the life and strength of that Spirit which caused it to spring. Indeed it is an hard matter either to speak the word of the Lord,

or to hear the word of the Lord. A man may easily speak what he invents, and another may easily hear and judge of such words; but to speak the word of life, requires the tongue of the learned in the language of God's Spirit; and to hear the word of life, requires a quickened ear; and to know the times and seasons of the Spirit, requires both being begotten of the Spirit, and being acquainted with it.

Quest. 5. *Was this the worship of the former Christians in the apostles days?*

Ans. Search the scriptures. Were not they come to the New Jerusalem? And where did they offer their sacrifices? Did they offer them in the Old Jerusalem, or at *Samaria*, or the mountain where the fathers worshipped? Or did they not rather offer them at the Mount Sion, to which they were come; where the male of the flock, even the Lamb without spot, is known, and the blood of sprinkling felt? Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. and 1 Pet. ii. 5. Oh! read! read in the life of God! the nature of the things themselves; and do not feed upon your own imaginations, or the imaginations of any other men concerning them. Sweet is our God; his living presence is exceedingly nourishing to the soul; precious is his power felt in the heart; it is no less than life eternal to worship him in his Spirit. Oh! let not the enemy of the soul cheat your souls any longer of the precious things of his kingdom, with husky and dry food instead thereof, which only gratifieth the earthly part, but nourisheth not the immortal life.

Quest. 6. *How came the worship of God to be transformed and changed so from the living power, into such dead formal ways, as generally worshippers in the world are found in?*

Ans. The enemy hath done this, by God's permission. The Lord was pleased to suffer him thus far to prevail against the truth; even to get into the form of it, and there to beget men into the form, and then deny and turn against the power. And this is the way of antichrist in kingdoms and nations, even to set up a formal way of worship, and by it to fight against the true power.

Quest. 7. *How long hath this been done, and how long is it yet to last?*

Ans. From antichrist's beginning, all the time of his reign, until his overthrow. The formal way of religion will never be overturned, nor the power of religion find place in the earth, but there will be still countenancing of formal ways of worship, and turning head against the power and life of the Spirit, until antichrist's time come to an end, and the Lord consume him by the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming.

Quest. 8. *When shall this be?*

Ans. The Lord is about this work. He hath already raised up that, which hath not been raised up for many generations; and the Lord hath sorely smote down the Spirit of antichrist in many hearts already; and he is fetching a great and universal blow at him; at which stroke, when it cometh from the throne of God, the nations shall tremble be-

fore him; and it will be as honourable to wait for the movings of his Spirit, and to worship him alone therein, as now it is reproachful.

ON PRAYER.

True prayer is the breathing of the child to the Father which begat it, from the sense of its wants, for the supply of those wants.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—John iii. 8. God, by the breath of his Spirit, begets a man out of the spirit and likeness of this world into his own image and likeness. He that is thus begotten, wants nourishment, wants the divine warmth, the breasts of consolation, the clothing of the Spirit, the garment of salvation; wants the bread of life to feed on; wants the water of life to drink; wants strength against the enemy's assaults, wisdom against his snares and temptations; wants the arm of the Deliverer to preserve and carry on the work of redemption daily; wants faith to deny the fleshly wisdom, that so he may trust and feel the virtue of the arm of the Deliverer; wants hope, patience, meekness, a clear guidance, an upright heart to follow after the Lord; yea, very many are the daily wants of that which is begotten by

the breath of God, in its state of weakness, until it be drawn up into the unity of the body, where the full communion with the life is felt, the heart satisfied, and the wants drowned.

Now the breathing of this child to the Father from the sense of these wants for his supply; that is prayer; nay, though it be but a groan, or sigh, which cannot be uttered, or expressed; yet that is prayer, true prayer, which hath an acceptance with the Lord, and receiveth a gracious answer from him. And he that begetteth the child, teacheth him to pray, even by the same Spirit which begat him. In watching daily to the Spirit, the child is kept sensible of the will of the Father, and in his light he sees the way wherein he is to walk; he sees also the enemy when he is coming, yea, and the snares he is privily laying, and he feels his own weakness to withstand or escape: and in this sense his heart cries to the Father of spirits for preservation; for him to stand by him; for him to step in in the needful time, even in the season of distress. And thus watching to the Spirit, the life of a Christian is a continual course of prayer: *he prays continually.* This is the living prayer of the living child, which consists not in a form of words, either read out of a book, or conceived in the mind; but in feeling the breath of its nature issuing out from the principle of life in it to the living spring, which is the Father of it; who, by causing his virtues to spring up in it, nourisheth it to everlasting life.

But now, man who is not born of the Spirit, but (by conceiving some of the truths of God in the wisdom from below) hath attained to some change of opinion and conversation, he pretends to be this birth from above, though indeed he is born but of "bloods," or "of the will of the flesh," or "of the will of man," John i. 13. and what God begets in, and gives to, his true child, he will be imitating, though he be out of the nature and spirit where the true child is begotten, and where the true gift of the Father is received by him. He will be believing, though he hath not received any proportion of the living faith from the hand of the Father: he will be forming repentance and sorrow for sin, though his heart be not turned from it; he will be hoping in God's mercy, although he be both from off the foundation, and from under the shadow of the mercy-seat; and he will be praying, though he hath neither received the Spirit, nor been taught by the Spirit to pray; and so being from that which should guide him, and teach him the truth and way of worship as it is in Jesus, he runs out into the inventions and imaginations, and sets up a way of his own chusing; which he having much considered of, and beat out by reasonings, and fenced about with arguments, he grows wise in his own eyes, and now verily believes it to be the way of God, and that he is able to maintain it against all opposers. Thus one man, he is for a form; another man, he is against a form, and for conceived prayers; and each think themselves able to maintain their own, and to

overthrow each other. But oh! that that ear were open which can hear the truth! that where there is any true, honest, upright desire after God, from the simplicity of the heart, it might not be thus betrayed through the subtilty of the fleshly wisdom, which lies lurking in the wise, reasoning, knowing part, to betray the poor weak babe. The natural man, the reasoning man, the understanding man, the wise man according to the natural wisdom, cannot understand the things of God. Here is no learning to pray aright, to believe aright, to hope aright, to mourn aright, to rejoice aright, &c. but this wisdom must be brought to nothing, 1 Cor. i. 19. and a man must become a child to all knowledge, as let in this way; and he that so becomes a child, is taught to pray, to believe, to wait, to hope, and all that is necessary to eternal life.

Now as the Father teacheth to pray, so he giveth desires or words, if he please, according to the present need. Sometimes he gives but ability to sigh or groan (if he give no more, he accepts that). Sometimes he gives strong breathings and plenty of words to pour out the soul in before the Lord. But if a man should catch those words, and lay them up against another time, and offer them up to God in his own will, this would be but will-worship and abomination. This I have known experimentally, and have felt the wrath of God for it. That is prayer, which comes fresh from the Spirit; and that is a true desire which the Spirit begets; but the affections and sparks of man's kindling please not the Lord, nor do

they conduce to the soul's rest, but will end in the bed of sorrow, Isa. l. 11.

Now as touching the Book of Common Prayer, or prayers conceived without the immediate breathings of the Spirit, I shall speak mine own experience faithfully, which is this; I have felt both these ways draw out the wrong part, and keep that alive in me, which the true prayer kills. And he that utters a word beyond the sense which God begets in his spirit, takes God's name in vain, and provokes him to jealousy against his own soul. "God is in heaven, thou art on earth, therefore let thy words be few." The few words which the Spirit speaks, or the few still, soft, gentle breathings which the Spirit begets, are pleasing to God, and profitable to the soul; but the many words which man's wisdom affects, hurt the precious life, and thicken the veil of death over the soul, keeping that part alive which separates from God; which part must die ere the soul can live.

The true prayer is by that which God begets in the virtue of his Spirit, ("praying always in the Spirit," Ephes. vi. 18. Jude 20.) in the time he chooses: for the Spirit breatheth as well when he listeth, as where he listeth; and man cannot limit him when he shall breathe, or when he shall not breathe; but is to wait the season of his breathing, and so to "watch unto prayer."

Now if the prayer be in words, (for there is a praying without words) then it must be in those words which he pleaseth to give, from the sense which he kindleth, and not in the

words which man's wisdom teacheth, or would choose to use. And indeed, in the true religion, and in every exercise of it, man's wisdom is kept out, and nailed to the cross, by which means the immortal life is raised, and grows in the true disciple. He believes, he hopes, he waits, he prays, he mourns, he rejoices, he obeys, &c. in the cross to the mortal part; not as man's wisdom teacheth, or would teach, or can teach any of these things; for his sacrifice is still an abomination, even to the wise Egyptian part in himself; (O wise man! abase thyself before the Lord in his Spirit, that thou mayest read this and live!) but as the life teacheth, as the wisdom from above teacheth, which breaketh down, shutteth up, confoundeth and destroyeth man's wisdom, while he is teaching his babe.

[So that mark: prayer is wholly out of the will of the creature, wholly out of the time of the creature, wholly out of the power of the creature; in the Spirit of the Father, who is the fountain of life, and giveth forth breathings of life to his child at his pleasure.]

Vol. 2, p. 420.

ON MINISTRY.

[AFTER the dispensation of the law, which was a shadow of good things to come; and after the dispensation of the prophets, who foretold of better days, and of a better state to come, than the days and state under the law were; it first pleased God to send the forerunner John the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the King and his kingdom; and then to send the King himself, in the fulness of his Spirit, to gather disciples to him, and to furnish them with a competent measure of the same Spirit, to raise up a spiritual seed to him, in whom he would set up his kingdom, dwelling, walking, and reigning there; causing his light to shine from thence round about the earth, as from his holy city, founded upon his holy hill of Sion.

Now those disciples or ministers whom he chose to raise up this holy seed unto him, he made fit and able to minister his new covenant, by which it was to be raised; yea, he furnished them with such a power of his Spirit, that they were able through him to minister, not in the letter, as the old covenant was ministered (which left the people still dead; nay, because of the transgressing nature, made the offence abound, and so increased death upon them) but in the quickening Spirit, which raiseth from death, and bringeth into the light of the living, to walk with the living God towards the land of eternal rest

and peace. So that that which they ministered was Spirit, and that which they ministered to was spiritual. By the power of the Spirit, in preaching the living word of faith, they reached through the veil to that which lay in death; they stirred up a living principle, and ministered life to it through the Spirit. Gal. iii. 5. And such as were born of this living principle, they taught to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the Spirit, and not to run back to the ministration of the letter (as was proper for the Jews in their day) after the manner of the former dispensation, but to keep in the living principle, to grow up in the seed, into the eternal life and immortality of the gospel.

And thus the scriptures being read, (in this living principle) or any one speaking from God being heard, it is mingled with faith, and becomes profitable, feeding and refreshing the young tender plant, the living principle, and causing it to grow up into God: whereas whatever is understood, or received, or held out of this, feeds but the earthly, and doth but thicken the veil over the living seed; to which the kingdom belongs, and to which the gospel is sent to be preached, to raise it, that it might live, and thrive, and grow up into its stature, that so it might inherit.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," said John the Baptist. Mat. iii. 2. "It is come unto you," said Christ. Mat. xii. 18. That power of life which was made manifest in him, was it; "and this kingdom is also within you," saith Christ to the Pharisees. Luke

xvii. 21. The Pharisees demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come? It cometh not, saith he, with outward shew or observation; it cometh not that way you look for it; to wit, by the manifestation of an outward glorious king, to reign outwardly in the commonwealth of the outward Israel; but the kingdom is within you. How was it within them? Christ explains to them in another place; it was in them like a grain of mustard seed; it was the least of all the seeds in their hearts. There were many great seeds of darkness there, but yet there was also one little seed of light. It was there as well as the rest, (though less than them all) and did sometimes cast some glimmerings of light, and of its shining in the darkness, though the darkness could not comprehend it. This seed was also likened to leaven, which being received by faith into the lump, would leaven the whole lump, and bring it into the savour and dominion of the kingdom. Now the ministry of the apostles was to turn men from Satan's kingdom to this kingdom; from his large compass of dominion in the heart, to this narrow seed; from his great territories of darkness, to this little principle of light; from his great power of death, to this little weak thing of God; wherein the eternal power and godhead is made manifest, as this comes to be opened and increased by the Spirit. Here light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; where it is to grow up, and from whence it is to be reaped after its growth to perfection.]....VOL. 2, p. 33.

It is not preaching things that are true which makes a true minister; but the receiving of his ministry from the Lord. The gospel is the Lord's, which is to be preached, and is to be preached in his power; and the ministers which preach it are to be endued with his power, and to be sent by him. The apostles themselves, though they had received instructions concerning the kingdom from Christ's own lips, both in his life-time, and after his resurrection, Acts i. 3. and had received a commission from him to teach all nations, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19. yet this was not sufficient to make them able ministers of the New Testament; but, before they went abroad to preach, they were to wait for the power, Acts i. 4. 8.; and when they had received it, they were to minister in it, that men might be converted to the power, and by the power, that the faith of persons might not stand in the wisdom of their words, (which Paul might have abounded in, as well as others) but in the power of God. 1 Cor. ii. 5. And this was it made Paul minister in fear and trembling, lest the wrong part in him should minister; lest the earthly understanding part should be holding forth the truths of God out of the life, out of the power, and so he should convert men to the wisdom of the words he spake, and not to the power, ver. 2, 3. This was it he was sent for, to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," Acts xxvi. 18.; from the spirit of enmity and death, to the Spirit of love and life: and this he was careful of in his

ministry, that men might not run away with his words, and miss of the thing. And this also was the way whereby he discovered true and false ministers: "I will come, and know (saith he) not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power: for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."—1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. Many men might catch their words, and run away with them, and preach them; but they could not minister in the power. Now the kingdom which the gospel ministers are the preachers of, consists not in words, but in power. "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the New Testament is a ministry of the Spirit, and it cannot be without the Spirit. It is a reaching to men's consciences "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power," 1 Cor. ii. 4. and 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. which being felt in the heart, and turned to, this converts them to God.

The ministry of the gospel doth not consist in a bare opening of the letter (or raising of doctrines and uses from the letter, which the wisdom of man may easily perform) as the ministry of the law did: but in bringing men to the feeling of the Spirit, even of the eternal power of God which redeems, in turning men from the darkness to the light, in setting their faces towards the power. The gospel is the substance of what was shadowed out in the law; and he that ministers it must minister substance. He must have the heavenly treasure, that is the substance, in his earthly ves-

sel, 2 Cor. iv. 7.; and he must give out of this treasure into the vessel which God prepares: and that he may do this, he must minister in the Spirit, and in the power. His words must not be such as man's wisdom would teach, or as man's comprehension would gather; but such words as God's wisdom prepares for him, and puts into his mouth. He that will be a true minister, must receive both his gift, his ministry, and the exercise of both from the Lord: and must be sure in his ministering to keep in the power, or he will never win others to the power: but in keeping in the power, while he is ministering and standing in the cross to his own understanding and wisdom, giving forth the truths which the Lord chooseth to have him speak in the words which God chooseth, even in the words which are ministered to him by the power, in thus ministering he shall save his own soul, and those that hear him, even all who in fear and meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul. For alas! alas! many have received words of truth, and apprehensions of knowledge, whereby they hope to be saved; but how few are acquainted with that knowledge which stands in the power, which alone converts and keeps alive unto God!

CHRIST, by his ministry, calleth his disciples out of the world up to the Father; out of the honour, riches, and whatever else is of the world. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John v. 44. And the rich man, he bids him "sell all and follow him." And the apostle John saith, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John ii. 15, 16. He that will be a disciple of Christ, must travel out of the earthly into the heavenly, leaving all that is of this world behind him, possessing nothing as his portion, but him who hath called him out of his country, from among his kindred, and from his father's house, to another land, kindred, and habitation. So that here they are pilgrims and strangers, sojourners and passengers, unknown to the world, and of a strange garb, behaviour and appearance in it; not enjoying any thing as the world enjoys; not using any thing as the world useth; not honouring men, or receiving honour from men, as the world gives or receives honour; but honouring men in the Lord, and receiving honour from the Lord: and whatever they seem to retain of the earth-

ly things, they hold as stewards under the Lord; not using or disposing of them, as they think good, but waiting for the discovery of the Master's pleasure, who is to order, in his counsel and wisdom, all that is his own to his own glory. The law requireth a tenth part to be given up to the Lord; the gospel requireth all, *soul, body, spirit, good name, &c.;* even that the whole possession be sold, and laid at the Master's feet; and he that keepeth any thing back, cannot be a disciple; cannot be a soldier of Christ.

The Lord *circumciseth the heart* of believers under the new covenant, *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, that they may live: he causeth the plant to spring up out of the dry and barren ground, which he watereth with his blessing; and he layeth his axe to the root of the old tree, hewing at it even till he hath cut it up: he engrafteth the Eternal Word into the heart, and by it is daily purifying thereof, fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness therein, and carrying on the work of faith with power:* and the ministry which he gave was for the "perfecting the saints," Ephes. iv. 12, 13. which ministry exhorted and encouraged believers (from God's promises of his presence and powerful operation of his Spirit in the hearts of his sons and daughters) to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Now that the corrupt tree shall never be cut down whilst man is in the body, that the heart shall never be thoroughly circumcised to love the Lord, but be in danger of "*offending God through the love of the creature,*" this doctrine and belief springeth not from the pure fountain of life and power; but the reasoning part hath gathered it from its conceivings beneath the power.

The seed of God cannot sin (for as he is pure which begetteth, so is that pure which is begotten of him:) nor can man sin, who is born of it, and abides in it: and if God please to perfect the birth and the work of circumcision, what can hinder a man from being wholly born from it, and from abiding in it? Indeed a man that strives in his own strength, either against sin, or towards holiness, may well doubt of ever having it accomplished; but he that feels the eternal power beginning the work, and carrying it on daily, cannot doubt but he can perfect it; yea, and is encouraged (by the feeling thereof) to hope and wait on him for the perfecting of it.

As for the instances of David and Peter, they reach not the thing: for though David and Peter did fall, yet both David and Peter might attain an higher state before they went out of the body, than they were in before they fell. David was a great prophet, and Peter a precious disciple; but yet there was an higher state to be administered, even the receiving that which the prophets prophesied of, and which the disciple was to wait for. The disciples who had known Christ, and had been

taught by him, and had received a commission from him, to whom all power in heaven and earth was given; yet were to wait for a further and higher state, even for receiving "the promise of the Father, the power from on high," that he that was with them might be in them. John xiv. 17. John was as great as any prophet, and yet he that was least in the kingdom was greater than he. Read the Acts of the Apostles; behold what a precious people was brought forth, even in the beginning of the apostles' ministry; how full of faith, how stripped of the world, how single-hearted to God, and one towards another! Acts ii. 42, &c. and Acts iv. 32, &c. What would these be, abiding and growing up in the vine? The cutting off of sin is necessary while in the body; but to make the committing of sin necessary while in the body, is a great derogation to the power of God's grace, and to the mystery of faith, which overcometh the evils of the heart, and the worldly nature within; purifieth the conscience from dead works, and is "held in the pure conscience." Oh! that men knew the power, and the faith which stands in the power! for then would they not judge it so impossible to be cleansed by the faith through the power. Oh! that light, that pure light of the Spirit, wherein the living blood runs, which cleanseth from all sin, and keepeth clean them that abide and walk in it! If this were but a little felt, such doctrines as these (which are gathered in the comprehension from words read, without being let into the thing itself) would soon vanish, and find

no place in the heart where the power dwells, nor in the understanding which is renewed, preserved, and fed by the power. For the things of God are to be known and held in the understanding which is given of God, (which understanding is of the Spirit, and is spiritual) and not with the natural understanding, which cannot receive the things of the Spirit, but only a carnal apprehension and sense of the words of the Spirit, according as a man can beat them out with, and comprehend them in, his reasoning part.

Christ presenteth to the Father, when he hath purified the heart and mind, and made it fit for God's pure life and presence. He hath received the fulness from the Father, and hath freely given of his grace and of his truth to the sons of men, to regenerate them, to cleanse and sanctify their hearts, and make them fit for God to dwell in. He sitteth in his temple as "a refiner and purifier of silver," (who is like "a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap") and when he hath purified his disciples, his children, his Levites, he presenteth them to the Lord, for the Lord to tabernacle and dwell in: when he hath thoroughly consecrated them, he presenteth them as kings and priests to his Father, to offer up "an offering in righteousness," and to reign with him in his kingdom. Mal. iii. 3. Rev. i. 5. And there were some so purified by the leaven of the kingdom, (which purgeth out the old leaven

by degrees, even till at length it hath made the lump wholly new) that to them all things were pure. Titus i. 5. There were some "come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Thus it was before the apostacy; yea, and after the apostacy there were some found standing on "Mount Sion" again, such as had learned the "new song;" such as "were redeemed from the earth; such as "were not defiled with women," (with any of the false churches, or their false ways of worship) but had kept their virginity in the wilderness. If ye would know who these were, they were the "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb" after the apostacy, who were thoroughly cleansed by the spirit of burning, insomuch as "in their mouth was found no guile," but "they were without fault before the throne of God." Rev. xiv. 1—6.

The work of the Spirit of Christ in the heart is an inward work, and doth not consist in outward times or seasons, but in spiritual degrees and seasons; which when they are finished, the heart renewed, the spirit changed, the work wrought out; then the glory of the Father is revealed, the entrance into the everlasting kingdom ministered, and then

there is a sitting down in the everlasting mansion, even with Christ in the heavenly places which he hath prepared; where they that are redeemed, and purged, and sanctified, sit together with him: and as the body cannot hinder his entering into the spirits of his saints, and his dwelling in them, no more can it hinder their entering into him and dwelling in him.

Now there are several exercises of spirit, several measures of faith, and several degrees of life and glory. Some are under the clouds, some in the sea; some in Egypt, some in the wilderness; some waiting for his appearance, some in the enjoyment of him already appeared. In some the work of regeneration, of sanctification, of newness of spirit and life is but begun; in others it is interrupted, and they come to a loss; in some it is much carried on, even towards consummation; and some are already "complete in him;" finding fulness of satisfaction in him, (in whom the everlasting springs are opened, to the full content of their hearts) and bring forth fruit to him, to the full content and satisfaction of his heart. In the apostles' days there were those that waited for his coming, and there were those also that knew him come, and had received the good understanding from him, and were "in the eternal life." John v. 20.

Yet this doth not exclude growth, for the fulness is infinite; and though a perfect state may be attained in the perfect gift, yet there is a growth in the perfection (for Christ who was perfect, and in whom was no guile, grew in wisdom, and knowledge, and in favour with

God and men.) And as God is infinite, so to that which is transplanted into him, there is no end of growth in him; but the tree, which stands in God's holy earth, by his pure river of waters, shall grow forever and ever into his endless life and fulness.

To know Christ as the light eternal (as he was yesterday, is to-day, and will be for ever;) to trust this light in its convictions, calls, and free openings of love, to feel its living virtue, and in that virtue to give up all that is of the earthly nature and spirit; to sell all for the everlasting inheritance; this is indeed the way to life. But it is not the doing of things which is of value; for man may imitate and strive to do much, and may go a great way *in forsaking all, and in taking off his affections from things* (inasmuch as he may give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet it profit him nothing;) but it is the doing of things in the virtue, in the life, in the power which comes from Christ, which is of acceptance with God, and of advantage to the soul. Every motion and operation of true life springs from the root of life, and hath the virtue of the root in it; and that which causeth it to differ from all men's imitations, and from all the likenesses which the earthly spirit can frame, is the nature and virtue of the root being found in it. Therefore he that will be a true Christian, must eye Christ the spring of his life, and keep in the feeling of his living virtue, and in

that offer up all his sacrifices of faith, love, and obedience to God; and he that will be a true minister, must wait upon the power himself, to be an instrument (in the hand of the power) to direct men to this, and to preserve and build them up therein.

But alas! this is the stone which the wise builders have all along refused! The builders before the coming of Christ, they got a knowledge concerning the Messiah to come; but being unacquainted with the thing itself, rejected both it at its coming, and also the vessel wherein it appeared. And the builders all along the apostacy got a knowledge of Christ come, and preached believing in him crucified as the way to life; but the living stone, the living thing itself (which is both the foundation, the corner stone and the top stone of the building) they have been ignorant of, and ready to persecute every appearance of it. Christ can no more now appear in Spirit, than formerly he could in that prepared body of flesh, but the wise builders now are as ready to cry out against him for a blasphemer, a profaner of God's ordinances, a deceiver of the people, as the wise builders then were. "But wisdom," in all ages, "is justified by her children," and of none else. He that is born of the wisdom, he can discern the womb, and own the fruit and branchings forth thereof under the mean dark veil, whereby it hides itself from all the fleshly-wise of every age. "The kingdom of God cometh not by observation;" the wisest Scribes and Pharisees could not know it by all the observations which they

could gather out of Moses and the prophets' writings; nor can any now know it by any observations they can gather out of the apostles' writings; but by being born of that Spirit whereof they were born, and by being formed in that womb wherein they were formed, by this means alone is the thing come to be known which they knew. He that receiveth the same eye, seeth the same thing, according to his measure; and coming to the life, wherein they received the truth; the words which they spake concerning the truth are easy. Thus as they were writ in the Spirit, so are they there alone truly read; and being so read, they become exceedingly profitable to that which so reads them; but man guessing and imagining and reasoning in his carnal wisdom concerning the things of God, and so gathering senses and meanings about the words and expressions of scripture, doth but build up a Babel, which the eternal life and power will throw down (whenever he appears) with that which built it. Oh! that men were wise to wait for the discovery of the true rock, and of the true builder upon that rock! that that city and building might be raised in them, which God alone can rear; that they might not be left desolate and miserable in that stormy day, which will shake all buildings, and foundations, and rocks, but "our Rock;" wherein all professors, and preachers, and high notionists, and whatever sort else can be named, (who have stumbled at God's living truth, and at the pure appearance of his redeeming power, which in this age hath mightily broke

forth, after the long dark night of apostacy, to the sight of every eye which is opened in the Spirit) shall confess with tears, sorrow, anguish and shame, that *their rock is not as our rock, they themselves being judges.* For though all sorts of professors generally own Christ as the rock in words, yet most miss of the thing; and the subtle enemy hath made use of a notion, or apprehension of the thing in the carnal mind, to deceive them of the thing, to keep them from feeling the eternal virtue, the living power of life in the heart, which is the arm of God's salvation, whereby Christ draws man's lost soul and spirit out of the grave of sin and corruption, up to the Father. But oh! how are poor hearts deceived! who think, by a believing of what Christ did, of a satisfaction he made for them while he was here on earth, though they lie in the pit all their days, though they carry the body of sin about with them to the very last of their time here in the body, and have not felt the arm of God's power breaking down their spiritual enemies, their lusts, their corruptions, and redeeming them from them; yet hope to be saved in the end, and to be presented without spot or wrinkle to God! Christ had the name Jesus given him, because he was to save his people from their sins; and no man can truly and livingly know the name Jesus, further than he feels the saving virtue of it; but he that effectually feels the virtue, he indeed knows the name, and can bow at the name, feeling his lusts and enemies bowed under by the power thereof, and that raised up in him,

which can worship the Father in the Spirit and in the truth. Oh! that the sons of men knew; Oh! that the teachers and professors of this age knew, what they have so long reviled and trampled upon! Surely they would mourn bitterly, kiss the Son, and escape the wrath.

Now, if the Lord please to smite any one's earthly wisdom and comprehension, (which is the main thing which stands in the way of the pure openings and revelations of the life) and give him the feeling of any thing here written, let him in fear acknowledge the Lord, sacrificing to his goodness, and waiting upon him to be kept in that feeling, not magnifying or villifying any of his instruments; but in meekness and humility embracing the instructions of the Almighty, from the hand by which he pleaseth to give them forth.

[The preceding remarks on "Prayer," &c. are principally taken from a piece entitled "The consideration of a position concerning the Book of Common Prayer," &c.—Here divested of its controversial form.]

TO ALL SUCH AS COMPLAIN THAT THEY WANT POWER: NOT APPLYING THEMSELVES TO YIELD SUBJECTION TO WHAT OF GOD IS MADE MANIFEST IN THEM, UPON A PRETENCE OF WAITING FOR POWER SO TO DO.

THE Lord God of eternal power, who made man in his own image, he stretcheth forth his arm to save and redeem his lost creature; it is his power alone that effecteth the work of redemption; he quickeneth man, who is dead in trespasses and sins; he keepeth alive, and leadeth on the quickened soul in the path of life; he conquereth, scattereth, and subdueth all the enemies round about the soul, even all the lusts, corruptions, and temptations, which lead unto, and entangle in, perdition.

Yet the Lord God requireth somewhat of the man whom he saveth, without which being found in man, and returned to him from man, he saveth him not.

Quest. *What doth he require of man?*

Ans. He requireth of man, *repentance, faith, and obedience.* That he should turn at his call, from the darkness to the light; that he should trust in, and cleave to, the light, but believe the spirit of darkness no more; and lastly, that he should obey the light, follow the light, walk in the footsteps of the living towards the land of light; work the works of God in the light.

Quest. *How can man do this?*

Ans. Of himself he cannot; but being touched, being quickened by the eternal power, being turned by a secret virtue and stirring

of the life in his heart, then he can turn towards that which turneth him. Being drawn by the life, by the power; he can follow after the life, and after the power. Finding the sweetness of the living vine, and his soul made alive by the sap of the vine, his heart can now cleave to, and abide in, the vine, and bring forth the fruit of the living faith and obedience to the husbandman, who daily dresseth the heart, that waiteth in the living principle for further life from the fountain, that it may bring forth the fruits of life more and more.

Now mark: Is it possible for any man to come to the eternal rest, that travels not in the path? Or is there any path, but the repentance, faith and obedience of the living spirit; even of the child begotten by the eternal power, who is taught by the Father to abide and walk in the life and in the power?

God putteth forth his hand all the day long, to fetch home lost man. He hath given him a talent, a living talent, which is able to work man into life, and to bring forth the fruits of life in man. Man overlooks the talent, joins not his heart to it, brings not forth the fruits of life to the giver, but cries he wants power; and *what is he? What can he do? Can he cleanse his own heart? Can he kill his corruptions? Can he quicken himself?* &c.

Now mark again. There are several dispensations of God to mankind; in all which, man, of himself, falls short of the life, of the power, of the glory, and comes under condemnation. God lays the blame on man for

not hearkening, for not believing. for not walking with him. Man lays the blame on God, and says he wants power. Look on him who is not obedient to the light, which he cannot but confess to shine in his heart, and often to reprove him; ask him why he doth not obey it? Is not this his plea; *that he wants power?* Now let men consider, will this stand before the throne of God? This is the condemnation, that men do not believe the light of life, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, do not trust and follow the light which would lead them to life, but trust and follow the darkness, which leads into death, and into everlasting condemnation. Their plea is, *they want power so to do.* Is this true?

I confess the power doth not so flow forth to man, as man expects it; but the power of life works man out of death in a mystery, and begins in him as weakness. There is all the strength, all the power of the enemy, against the work of God in the heart. There is but a little thing, like a grain of mustard-seed, a weak thing, a foolish thing, even that which is not, (to man's eye) to overcome all this; and yet in this is the power. And here is the great deceit of man; he looks for a great manifest power in or upon him to begin with, and doth not see how the power is in the little weak stirrings of life in the heart, in the rising up of somewhat against the mighty strength of corruption in him; which he returning towards, cleaving to, and waiting upon the Lord in, the strength of the Lord will be made manifest in its season, and he will be drawn nearer and

nearer to the Lord, and his enemies be overcome and fall he knows not how. But he that waits for such a mighty appearance of power at first, looking so to begin, and after that manner to be preserved and carried on, can never in this capacity so much as walk in the path eternal; nor is not in the way of receiving the power, which springs up as weakness, and leads on and overcomes enemies in a mysterious way of working, and not in such a manifest and direct way of conquest, as man's wisdom expects.

The seed of the kingdom is sown man knows not how, even by a sound of the eternal Spirit, which he is not a fit judge of; and it grows up he knows not how; and the power appears and works in it, in a way that he is not aware of. He looks for the kingdom, the power, and the life, in a way of his observation, answerable to the thoughts and expectations of his heart. But thus it never comes; but in the way of its own eternal motion, it springs in the hearts of many, and they overlook the thing, and turn from it daily, not knowing its proper way of appearance, but expecting it some other way. And thus the enemy holds them in the bands of death, and they are captives in the strange land, refusing the Prince of life, in his daily offers of life, because they look not for him thus, but after another way and manner. And till this eye of observation be put out in them, they can never clearly see the appearance of the Saviour to them, nor feel the efficacy of his saving of them from that, from which none but he can deliver.

Now for the sakes of such as are single-hearted, and yet withheld from the enjoyment of the life of God and of his pure power, through a way of wrong expecting it; I shall say a little concerning the operation of the power in quickening and leading on the quickened soul, as also concerning the way of its springing up in the heart, and the necessity of this way. I myself was long withheld from obedience to the light eternal, in its low appearance of discovering and convincing of sin, through this very deceit, believing that my condition required the manifest appearance of a very great power to help me; and so when sin overcame me, I did only mourn over it, crying after and waiting for power, but was kept from joining with, and cleaving to that, wherein the power springs up and manifests itself according to its own pleasure, quite contrary to the way of man's expectation.

The operations of the power are divers and gradual, according to the condition and necessity of the soul whom it visits, and reacheth forth its hand unto.

1. There is a discovery of the darkness, and of the erring of the heart from God. This is power; for this should never be in any heart, could all the powers of darkness there withstand it.

2. There is a rising of the heart against the evil, with a desire of deliverance from it, and of the springing up of the good in such power as might conquer it. This is a further appearance of power than the former, and a

good beginning towards believing or joining with the redeeming arm, which all the powers of darkness (with all manner of subtilty) endeavour to divert the heart from.

3. There is an upright frame of spirit begotten, and a truth of heart formed towards the Lord; from which desires, and cries, and groans after his life and presence, and for deliverance from the enemy, and from under the power of his deceit, spring more and more.

4. There is a fear begotten in the heart of being deceived by the enemy, of being drawn from the feeling of, and panting after, the life and power of God.

5. There is an hope and trust in the Lord's goodness and mercy, with a daily waiting for his appearance, for the manifestation of his Spirit and pure presence, and for the springings up of his fresh life and precious virtue.

6. There are overturnings of the enemy, battering down his strong-holds, breaking of many snares, beating back of many furious assaults, and causing the plant of life to grow up and triumph over all the powers of darkness.

7. There are secret stayings and upholdings of the heart in the hour of darkness, when God sees necessary to let forth the power thereof upon the soul, and to eclipse his own power. When the enemy buffets, tempts, prevails, and gets ground upon the soul, is drawing it back under the veil, even into the pit, and nothing appears near to stop it or rescue the soul from death, and from the power of the grave, but the sting thereof en-

ters and deeply wounds the soul; yet even then the power is near, secretly upholding, preserving, and watching over the soul; and waiting for the proper season of deliverance. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand," said David, when his feet had almost slipped into the grievous snare of desperate unbelief, and murmuring against God's dealings with him and the rest of his people.

Many more operations of the power might be mentioned, even of its tabernacling and glorious appearing in some vessels in various ways, both delighting itself in the heart, and also filling the heart with delight and joy in the pure life; but these things are better enjoyed and sweetly felt, in the silence of the fleshly part, than spoken of to that ear which is not fit to hear the sound thereof.

Secondly, *The way of the power's springing up in the heart;* which is,

1. In its turning from the darkness, in the faith, and in the pure obedience which flows from the faith. For as the soul turns from the power of darkness and death, towards the power of the eternal Spirit of light; so the power meets it, embraces it, appears to it, and manifests itself in it, proportionable to its present capacity and condition. And as the soul, being touched with the living virtue, gives itself up to believe, and to trust the power which draws; so the power manifests itself in the heart, according to the proportion of the faith which the eternal virtue hath begotten there. And as the soul in the faith

gives itself up to obey, so the power appears and works the obedience. For we can do nothing of ourselves; but being called, being drawn, being required to do that which is far beyond our strength, and giving up thereto; the life springs, the power appears, which does the work. This the Philippians had experience of, to whom the apostle gave that exhortation; "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is the unbeliever hangs back, and cries, Where shall I have power? But the faith follows the moving and drawing of the Spirit, and the power never fails the faith. But that which cries, how shall I get out of Egypt? *Which way shall I ever be able to pass through this intricate wilderness?—How shall I overcome those mighty enemies, which already have the possession of the land I should inherit, and are strongly fenced in it, and mighty in strength to keep their hold thereof?* This is not the right seed, this is not the true Israel, for whom the everlasting inheritance of the life and of the pure power is prepared.

2. Under the cross, under the yoke to the corrupt, (yea, and to the very natural) the power springs. The false birth would have the power spring in a way pleasing to itself; at the time its wisdom sees necessary, and in the way its will would have it; but the power springs up according to its own wisdom, at its own time, and after its own way. When the man would have it, then it flies from him; and

when it is not expected, nor perhaps desired, (at least in that way wherein it chooses to appear) then it springs up and puts forth itself. Most men, that have felt any thing of God, cannot but desire his life and power; but most fly the cross, wherein it hath chosen to appear; and so they can never meet with it, but are still complaining for the want of it. In the power is the ease, the rest of the gospel. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,* saith Christ, *and ye shall find the rest which flows from the power.* This made Paul rejoice in the cross of Christ, whereby the fleshly lusts were brought down in him; and the life and eternal power sprang in the seed of the kingdom: for under the cross the seed grows up and flourishes, and the flesh withers and dies. And as the power of flesh and death wastes, so the power of Spirit and life increases.

3. The power springs under the fear, and in the uprightness and love which God hath begotten. I put these together, for there is a close unity between them. The fear is the dwelling of the upright heart, and the love is within the fear. He that distrusts himself, feels his own nothingness, finds no power to do any thing God requireth, and yet also fears to stay behind the light of God's Spirit, in any thing it requires, and so finds a putting on forwards in the faith; in him the power delights to appear. He that would feel strength before-hand, and act in the sense of that strength, from him the power withdraws; but he that is weak, and hath no strength, but still as it freely drops into him from moment to

moment, this is the vessel the power chooseth to manifest itself to, and to be continually appearing in. This is the new covenant, "I will put my fear in their hearts." And where the fear of the new covenant is found, so much life, power, and eternal virtue, as is necessary for the present state of that heart, cannot be far off. So in the *upright-hearted*, in the heart that is true to God, the power of deceit cannot dwell, but the power of truth delights to fill it, in a way suitable to the state of the spirit, and so as may be seen by the eye of the spirit, and felt by the spiritual sense. And in the love is the constraining power, which constrains from the evil path, from the path of unbelief and disobedience, into the path of life.

Thirdly, *The necessity of this way of the springing up of the power*, and not in such a manifest way as man's heart desires, and as man's eye expects.

It is necessary in several respects. *In respect of God, in reference to the creature, and in reference to the soul's enemies.*

1. *In respect of God.* It is necessary that his power and life should spring up in the creature in its own way, according to the counsel of his own wisdom, suitable to his own nature, and not in the way which the creature chalks out and expects it in. God must be like himself, and walk in his own path in every thing he does. He is a God that hideth himself in the mystery of his working, throughout the whole track of man's redemption; and man must be wrought out of himself, out of his own thoughts, expectations, gathered apprehen-

sions concerning the kingdom and way to life, and led in a path he doth not know, (nor ever can know any longer than he is in it,) and in ways he hath not been acquainted with. The way of life is still new, every moment fresh and living; and the earthly part of those, who may have in some measure felt the power of regeneration, cannot know it, nor walk in it. Consider this, O ye that fence yourselves against the present appearance of the Spirit; and against the convictions, demonstrations, and drawings of its eternal light and power, by somewhat which ye have formerly felt and known.

2. *In reference to the creature*, the power of God must needs appear thus hiddenly, and in such a mysterious way.

1. That the creature might go through all those exercises of spirit, which are necessary to fit it for its inheritance in the holy land. There are *straits, wants, trials, temptations, inward weaknesses, buffettings from the enemy, withdrawings of the life, &c.* God seeth necessary to exercise the spirits of his with, that he might fit them for himself, and for a safe enjoyment of his life in fulness; which could not be, if there were such a manifest power to begin with, and continually at hand, to perform all in and for the soul, as many men wait for and think necessary to have.

2. That the fleshly part might be thoroughly worn out and destroyed. When the power appears and works mightily in the soul, there is somewhat apt to get up, to exalt himself by the power, and to abuse the power; and if the

power were not withdrawn, and this tormented and famished in the absence of the power, and in the withdrawing of the sweet appearance of life, a wrong thing would be stealing into the inheritance, and the soul would never be thoroughly purified, nor come to a pure enjoyment of the power. Thèrefore doth the Lord appear in this mysterious way, *that the promise might be sùre to the seed;* that the seed which is the right heir of the power, might come alone to inherit the power, and the false birth not touch the least enjoyment of it, but feel the bitter strokes of death and destruction from it. What had become of Paul, if he had had power to resist the buffettings of the enemy, as he desired? Would not his fleshly part have remained in the exaltation, and not have been brought down? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

3. *In reference to the enemy.* The enemy could never be wholly conquered, his strong holds in the heart broken down, and the redemption from under his hand perfected, were it not for this mysterious way of the appearing and working of the power, even out of the sight of man's eye, and contrary to his will and expectation. For had man such a power as he desires, still present with him; had he faith in his power, or obedience in his power, or could he take up the cross in his power, or have strength to fight against the enemy as he desires and expects, the enemy would still find entrance into him, and keep his hold of him. But God, who knoweth the state of the creature, with the strength and passages of the enemy into man, by working with his mighty

power in man according to his own will, and in the way of his own wisdom, (contrary to what man can desire or expect, but as he is taken into, and comprehended in, the eternal will) carries on his work sweetly, and safely, and perfects the salvations of those who will not, who run not, who desire not to be any thing, but wait to feel and know his power, and to become subject to it, and lie under, even in the lowest way of its manifestation and appearance.

Object. *This may be true in the ordinary way of redemption of souls; but there are deep captivities (even the captivity of Babylon inwardly, spiritually) which surely will need a very great appearance of the power of God to deliver out of; and what can that soul do, but wait there under the captivity, until the mighty power arise?*

Ans. It is true; the power must needs be very great, and the appearance of it wonderful, which delivers out of such captivity; but yet the beginnings of it may be small, and out of the sight of that eye which looks and waits for so great an appearance. Hast thou not light enough already to begin thy travel out of Babylon? Hast thou begun thy travel? Dost thou walk in the light which shineth upon thee in that dark land, to gather and lead thee out of it? Or wilt thou not begin to come out, till the very glory and brightness of Sion shine upon thee? If there be but light and power enough to lead thee one step out of the land of darkness and confusion of spirit, towards obedience to the lowest or meanest

truth, that is sufficient for thee at present; and as thou art found faithful here, more will spring in thee; but if thou stop here, (or at any time after thou hast begun and made some progress, because of any thing which falleth out contrary to thy expectation) then that which should lead thee on, and strengthen thee, stops also; and thou meetest not with that which is found and enjoyed by others in the way, because thou passest not on in it, but balkest thy proper path, judging somewhat more necessary towards thy beginning or progress, than the Lord judgeth, or yet seeth fit to impart to thee.

Thus the enemy betrays thee, and holds thee in his chains, which might be loosed and cast off by little and little, didst thou singly give up to the little appearance of that light and power which is able to unbind them, and not expect more at first (or afterwards) than the Lord hath allotted for thy present condition. And let me tell thee this from certain knowledge and experience; that thou, who hast been high, and hast tasted much of God, but hast abused it, and fed the wrong part with it, both in thyself and others; thou must be brought lower than the rest, and for a long season be kept lower; that the pure seed (which hath been deeply buried in thee) may overgrow and sink all thy knowledge, experiences, and observations, concerning the eternal life, and its way of appearance, which formerly thou hadst some true taste of, but now holdest out of the life.

Thou must come down, thou must become nothing by degrees, thou must lie at the foot of the reprovings of that light, which thou thinkest thou hast gone far beyond, and be glad of a little help now and then in the lowliness and humility of thy heart, which must not choose what appearance and manifestation it will have from God, before it will begin to follow him, but be glad of ever so little, that the infinite wisdom sees good to give forth by the hand of his mercy.

Whoever have been high, and are still waiting and expecting in the heights of their own wisdom and observations concerning the kingdom, let them take heed *of despising the day of small things*, and know that their proper beginning, yea the very path of eternal life itself, lies in the lowness, in the humility, even in that nothingness which bows before the least light of the day, and with gladness of heart enters into, and walks in it. For this I certainly know; the wise, the observing eye, the vast comprehending heart, which waits for such an extraordinary power, judging it cannot begin following the light, which daily appears to check and reprove, without some great manifest appearance of power; this cannot see the low little path of life, which is proper for it to walk in, and to the end whereof it must travel, if ever it come to sit down in the kingdom, or to inherit the power of the endless life. Precious is the dispensation of this age, great is the power and glory which is arising; but the wise and knowing of this age are shut out of it, as they have been out

of the life and truth of the dispensations of God in all ages. Happy is he who is not above that, wherewith God visiteth his soul to redeem it.

POSTSCRIPT.

That persons, who have not travelled into the land of life, want power, that is out of doubt. The state of Israel in its travels, is a state of weaknesses and wants. How can they in the wilderness but want that, which is to be possessed in the Holy Land? But dost thou want power to begin the travel with? Dost thou want what proportion of power the Lord sees necessary for thee in thy present estate? Is there nothing at all discovered to thee which is contrary to God, either in thy heart, or in thy conversation, or in thy worship, which thou dost not so much as strive to give up to the Lord in, waiting upon him for his power and strength to appear in helping thee? The light appears to discover and lead out of the darkness: now in giving up to the light, and not doubting but that which calls and draws out will give strength, and enable to come out, the power is met with unawares. But that which stands gazing and looking out after a power, which it expects to meet with, before it will so much as begin to follow the light; that cannot but abide in the captivity, and miss of that power which redeemeth from it. Therefore,

Wait to feel the light of life discovering and drawing from the evil; and let it choose what it shall please first to discover and draw from. And though it be little, and very inconsiderable in thine eyes, yet dispute not, but where the light first begins to lead, do thou there begin to follow.

Then in this waiting and subjecting to the manifestations of the light, out of the self-will, self-wisdom, self-knowledge, self-judgment, in the lowliness and abasedness of the mind and spirit before the Lord, the begettings of life in the light are felt, and the renewing into his pure image.

Afterwards that which is begotten (and begun to be renewed in the divine image) is by degrees taught more distinctly to know, discern, and walk in the path of life.

And after this, to that which is thus begotten, and taught the living faith and obedience, (which is wrought by the mighty power of God, though running in a low, secret, hidden way, from the eye of the creature) the great power is revealed, and he grows strong in the power *for God*, and against the enemies of his soul; and by this strength and feeling of God's presence, they *fall daily and continually before him*, and then his victory over them goes on with joy.

But he that stops at first may grow wise and conceited, concerning the things of the kingdom after the flesh, and may hope for great things at last; but by the deceit of the subtilty, is kept out of the living path, wherein they are to be waited for, reaped, and enjoyed.

Now for the encouragement of such as are willing to travel on in the weakness, yielding up their members to the present manifestation of the light, and waiting for the further appearance of the power; it is on my heart to add a letter of a dear friend and brother of mine in the truth, who hath been a deep traveller and fellow-sufferer with me formerly, before this help came forth from the throne of God, since the day-spring from on high hath vouchsafed to visit us, and to guide our feet in the way of everlasting peace.

THE LETTER IS AS FOLLOWETH:

DEAR FRIEND,

"MY dear and tender love salutes thee, in that love from whence I had my being, and from whence sprang all my Father's children, who are born from above, heirs of an everlasting inheritance. Oh! how sweet and pleasant are the pastures which my Father causeth all his sheep to feed in; there is variety of plenty in his pastures, milk for babes, and strong meat for them of riper age, and wine to refresh those that are ready to faint, even the wine of the kingdom, that makes glad the heart, when it is ready to faint, by reason of the infirmities. Sure I am, none can be so weary, but he takes care of them; nor none so nigh fainting, but he puts his arm under their heads; nor none can be so beset with enemies on every side, but he will arise and scatter; nor none so heavy laden and big with young, but he takes notice of them, and gently leads them, and will not leave them behind

unto the merciless wolf, because they are his own, and his life is the price of their redemption, and his blood of their ransom; and if they be so young that they cannot go, he carries them in his arms; and when they can feel nothing stirring after him, his bowels yearn after them; so tender is this good Shepherd after his flock. I can tell, for I was as one that once went astray, and wandered upon the barren mountains; and when I had wearied myself with wandering, I went into the wilderness, and there I was torn as with briars, and pricked as with thorns, sometimes thinking this was the way, and sometimes concluding that was the way, and by and by concluding all was out of the way; and then bitter mourning came upon me, and weeping for want of the interpreter; for when I sought to know what was the matter, and where I was, it was too hard for me. Then I thought I would venture on some way where it was most likely to find a lost God, and I would pray with them that prayed, and fast with them that fasted, and mourn with them that mourned, if by any means I might come to rest, but found it not, until I came to see the candle lighted in my own house, and my heart swept from those thoughts and imaginations, and willings, and runnings, and to die unto them all, not heeding of them, but watching against them, lest I should let my mind go astray after them. And here I dwelt for a time as in a desolate land uninhabited, where I sat alone as a sparrow upon the house-top, and was hunted up and down like a partridge upon the mountains,

and could rest no where, but some lust or thought or other followed me, and disquieted me night and day, until I came to know him in whom was rest, and no occasion of stumbling, in whom the devil hath no part; and he became unto me as a hiding-place from the storms, and from the tempests. Then came my eyes to see my Saviour, and my sorrow fled away, and he became made unto me all in all, my wisdom, my righteousness, and my sanctification; in whom I was and am complete, to the praise of the riches of his grace and goodness that endures for ever. Therefore be not discouraged, O thou tossed as with tempests! nor dismayed in thyself; because thou seest such mighty hosts of enemies rising up against thee, and besetting thee on every side: for none was so beset and tried, and tempted, as the true Seed was, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But be thou still in thy mind, and let the billows pass over, and wave upon wave; and fret not thyself because of them, neither be cast down, as if it should never be otherwise with thee: sorrow comes at night, but joy in the morning; and the days of thy mourning shall be over, and the accuser will God cast out for ever. For therefore was I afflicted, and not comforted, and tempted, and tried, for this end, that I might know how to speak a word in due season, unto those who are tempted and afflicted as I once was; as it was said unto me in that day when sorrow lay heavy upon me. Therefore be not disconsolated, neither give heed unto the reasonings and disputings of

thy own heart; nor the fears that rise therefrom, but be strong in the faith, believing in the light which lets thee see them, and his grace thou wilt know to be sufficient for thee, and his strength to be made perfect in thy weakness. And so thou rather wilt glory in thy infirmities, that his power may rest upon thee, than in thy earnest desires to be rid of them; for by these things thou wilt come to live in the life of God, and joy in God, and glory in tribulation, when thou hast learned in all conditions to be contented: and through trials, and deep exercises, is the way to learn this lesson. These things in dear love to thee I have written, being somewhat sensible of thy condition, and the many snares thou art daily liable unto; therefore watch that thou fall not into temptation, and my God and Father keep thee in the arms of eternal love, over all, unto the end, unto his praise; Amen.

JOHN CROOKE."

CONCERNING THE PERFECTING OF GOD'S WORK IN THE HEART.

Is it not the will of God that his people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit?

Is it not the will of Christ that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did he not bid them pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?" And would he never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Doth not he who hath the true, pure, living hope, (which anchors within the veil) purify himself, even as He is pure?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promises of God's holy presence, (who tabernacleth in his people that are cleansed and sanctified) to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear? Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where sin dwells? He may indeed to such, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with him.

Hath not Christ received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father? Is not this the end of receiving his power, to bring down the soul's enemies, and to purify and sanctify his church, that it may be without spot, or

wrinkle, or any such thing? Is he not the Captain of our salvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the strong man to be found, cast out, his goods spoiled, and the house emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Christ the author of faith, the finisher of faith; and doth not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with, and overcome, sin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armour of light, life, and salvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light should be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on those that are wholly armed with it? Are those that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his snares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the spiritual battles, him who rideth before them, conquering, and to conquer.

Oh! that men's eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they see the glory of truth, in the pure light which shines from God's holy mountain; and such dark doctrines of the night (which tend to the dishonour of Christ, his power, and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom) would pass away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his salvation, that by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, they might be made free from the law of sin and death, and not always be subject thereto! For all

whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may serve God in freedom of spirit, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defence which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overshadows, and his salvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a sufficient wall and bulwark against the enemy.

Now mind, Can any man, that hath his heart made upright by the Lord, keep that integrity, and sin? Is not every sin a departing from the purity, from the integrity? Was not every transgression against the first covenant, out of the first covenant, even a departing from the limits of it? Is not every transgression of the second covenant a departing out of the limits of the second covenant? He that abideth in Christ, doth he sin? Can he sin? Doth not he that sins depart out of his light, out of his life, out of his power, into the darkness, into the death, into the temptation of the enemy? Is it not promised, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: while the fear which God puts in the heart abides there, can that man sin? Doth not the pure fear cleanse the heart, and keep it clean, that the conscience may be void of offence, both towards God and man? Is the conscience void of offence, where sin is committed either against God or man? When

the blood flows in the pure light, doth it not wash? Doth it not wash clean? Doth it not make whiter than the snow? When sin is entered into afterwards, and committed again, doth it not defile? Oh! read in the true sense, in the true experience, with the true understanding, which God gives.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14.——Now they that are under this grace, under this Spirit, under this power, doth it not break the power and dominion of sin in them, and set them free therefrom? Can sin break in upon those who dwell under the shadow of the Almighty? Indeed a man may be under a literal dispensation of holy commands against sin, and yet be under the power of sin: but he that is gathered under the wing of Christ, under the grace and Spirit of the gospel, turned from Satan's power to God's power, and within the wall and bulwark thereof, he witnesseth this true, *Sin hath no dominion, sin cannot have dominion, sin shall not have dominion over you.* No device of the enemy shall be able to hurt or destroy on God's holy mountain; for his light shines there to dispel the darkness, and his power is revealed there, to scatter and dash in pieces the strength of the enemy whenever it appears.

CONCERNING THE GOSPEL STATE.

THE gospel is a ministration of the new covenant, or a spiritual ministration of the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law. There were many things under the law; but in the gospel, God hath gathered all into one; in Christ there is but one seed, one Spirit, one life, one power, which redeems, one circumcision, one baptism, one faith, &c.

The law was given by Moses, and the ministration thereof continued through the prophets, until the seed should come, which was to put an end to the law, and the righteousness thereof (as in the letter) and bring in the righteousness of the Spirit, which should last for ever.

The gospel is by Christ, by whom God spake in the last days, who is the beloved Son, the prophet and high priest of God, who is to be heard for ever; who taught his disciples, while he was with them on earth, in that body of flesh which his Father prepared for him; and afterwards by his Spirit (or holy anointing) whereby he continueth teaching his children, and bringing them up in the virtue, life, and power of the new covenant; giving them a new heart and spirit, and causing the old nature of the earthly Adam to die in them, and pass away from them.

The law was given to the Jew outward, and is against nature in man, which seems forward to obey, but will not.

The law also is given to check that part, or nature in man, which is above the seed, to which were all the shadows and types outward.

But in the gospel, which is the power of God to the redemption of the soul, that part is done away, and the seed raised, and comes to live in the soul, and the soul in the power which quickens it, in and through the seed.

And so, here the life, and virtue, and nature of the seed overshadows all, and changes all in the gospel-ministration; so that here is a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein God reigns, and where righteousness dwells; and the old things, where unrighteousness dwelt, and wherein the devil reigned, are done away, and so his kingdom is destroyed, and laid waste in man, and the kingdom of Christ set up, exalted, and established.

Then comes the mountain of the Lord's house to be known on the top, and above all the mountains and hills; and then is the flowing of the enlightened soul thither, to learn of the Lord in his holy sanctuary, that it may know his ways, and walk in his paths. Then is the voice of the true shepherd heard, and the law known (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) which cometh out of Sion, "and the word of the Lord (even the Holy One of Israel) which cometh from Jerusalem." Then is the day of the Lord known; the mighty, terrible, shaking day of the Lord, which is then upon all flesh, silencing it in the dread and awe of him, who is holy and pure; and the seed is then raised to life, and

in life and power, and the Lord alone exalted in that soul. "For the Son exalted the Father only, in the days of his flesh;" and it is so now, wherever the same seed and power of life is made manifest, and rules.

Then after this shaking, after the work of this terrible day of the Lord in the heart, when God hath purged away the filth and blood of the defiled soul and spirit, by his Spirit of judgment and burning, then that which is left shall be called holy, and dedicated to the Lord, even in every one that is written and reckoned by God among the living in his Jerusalem. And all God's tabernacles and dwelling-places on his holy mountain, and in his holy city, will he cover with the glory of his presence; and all their assemblies (by his cloudy pillar, and by his shining flame) will God be a defence about; before which brightness (and the arising of his life and power in the midst of his people) Satan with his devices and fiery darts shall fall like flashes of lightning, and his storms and winds shall not be able to prevail against the houses or dwelling-places which God builds on this his holy mountain of peace and salvation.

Then the rod of the stem of Jesse is known, and the branch which groweth out of his root, and the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him. "For grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" and where the grace and truth *which comes by Jesus Christ* is received, and his everlasting covenant entered into, there the same Spirit is poured forth, and rests (even upon all the sons,) and true judgment is set up in

the heart, and the soul established in the righteousness and peace of his kingdom.

So if any want wisdom, let him ask in faith; it is presently given from the Spirit of wisdom, which is poured out upon the seed; which is a Spirit of understanding and knowledge, and of pure heavenly fear, &c. which maketh quick in understanding the fear of the Lord; which fear (being understood and observed) keepeth the heart clean, teaching it to avoid and keep out of all that defiles; so that here is not so much as a touching the unclean thing by any of the sons and daughters, who are led by God's Spirit, and live and walk in the Spirit; but a following of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus fully and perfectly.

Let sin and imperfection be received back to Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, from whence it came; but let holiness and unstained beauty dwell in Sion; yea, let Urim and Thummim, even God's light and perfection, be with his redeemed people for ever and ever.

Here the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and the little child leads them. Here the lion devours not, but eats straw like the ox; and the sucking child, and the weaned child, can play in the hole of the asp, and put his hand on the cockatrice's den; and they that are in the power can tread upon serpents, and they cannot hurt, wound, poison, or destroy; for there is safety all over God's holy mountain, and the venom or poison of the wicked spirit cannot reach thither, to hurt or poison any

there: for God's earth is filled with knowledge, with life, with pure living knowledge, which preserves out of the reach of darkness and death.

Nay, here Ephraim doth not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; for the envying, vexing nature and spirit is taken out of them both. And here is turned to the Lord a people of a pure language, who speak the truth as they feel it, as they receive it from the Lord, in the life of it, in the true sense and understanding of it, and not according to their own apprehendings or imaginings concerning it, which are the various and many languages of Babel. For in the seed, and of the seed, is the pure language; but out from the seed are the many voices and languages (even the confusion of Babel); one speaking, as he apprehends, thus; another speaking, as he conceives, thus; so plainly manifesting that they are out from the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, whose voice is one, and language one, in all, in the day of the gospel. And he that speaks otherwise than the law and testimony of life speaks in the heart, it is either because he knoweth not, or is not yet gathered into, the morning-light of the everlasting day of the gospel; for there all are to speak, as the oracles of God, the truth as it is in Jesus.

In this day the anger of God is turned away, and condemnation come to an end, for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and the Comforter is

come, by whom God comforts the soul; and the soul with joy draweth water out of the wells or springs of the Comforter. Yea, the soul is gathered into the love (or into God, who is love,) where the Saviour and salvation is felt, and God found such a present help and strength in time of trouble, that fear is done away, and the Lord trusted and hoped in; yea, and boasted of, in every condition. So that his name is made mention of, and sung of, and exalted over all that can come to oppose or break down the work of his power in the heart; insomuch that the inhabitant of Sion cries out and shouts against the enemy, when he appears, because the Holy One of Israel is so great in the midst of her, who breaks the spear and the bow, the shield and the battle, Selah. See Isai. xii.

Yea, in this day the feast of fat things is made on God's holy mountain; of fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined. And in this mountain the veil of the covering (spread over the heart) is done away: for in the seed there is no feigned covering; but an opening of the unveiled eye, to see the unveiled life and power, even the revealed arm of the Redeemer.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It was said so in the old covenant, in the law dispensation; but it is not said so in the new covenant, in the gospel dispensation; for the veil is done away in Christ, and the children there with open face behold (as in a mirror) the glory of the Lord.

And here, where the seed is revealed, and the soul come into the seed, and become one with the seed, that is felt which breaketh the serpent's head; and when his head is broken, death is soon swallowed up in victory, and the tears of sorrow wiped away (so that there is no room for any tears now, but tears of joy, tears of melting love and sweetness, before the Lord,) and the rebuke because of uncircumcision taken away. For when God circumciseth the heart, "to love the Lord with all the heart," then it receiveth life from him, and then the shame and rebuke of the uncircumcised and dead state passeth away.

And then saith the soul, "Lo! this is my God I so much wanted, and so long waited for. Oh! he is come, he is come, to judge my heart in righteousness, and to bring under all that hath kept the seed under in me; and I feel him, my soul's salvation, and my heart is glad in him. And now I know the land of Judah" (for that land outwardly was but a figure of the inward,) "and the strong city that is therein" (which the righteous nation that keepeth the truth enters in at the gates of) "where God appointeth salvation for walls and bulwarks." See Isai. xxv. and chap. xxvi.

And in this day, when the seed is raised, when the gospel power reacheth to the seed, and raiseth up the soul with the seed, and punisheth Leviathan, that crooked serpent, and destroyeth the place where the dragons lay, so that as such a place it can be found no more, because the Lord hath made all things new, and laid waste the old, then shall be

sung to her that was afflicted a vineyard of red wine, which the Lord will keep and water every moment, lest any hurt it; yea, the Lord, who is the keeper of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, will keep it night and day; and though fury be not in the Lord, yet he will go through the briars and thorns which set themselves in battle against him, to hinder the current of his love and blessings upon his heritage.

But as for his people, God will be very gracious to them, answering them in all that they call upon him for, and being with them in the fire, and in the water; so that the waters shall not be able to overwhelm them, nor the flame of the fiercest fire kindle upon them. For the enemies' fire shall not be able to burn up God's heritage, nor their waters to overflow them; but God's fire and waters shall overflow and consume the adversaries, as he pleaseth to let forth his overflowing scourge and fiery indignation upon them.

The gospel is a state of pouring out the Spirit of God upon his seed, and his blessing upon his offspring; wherein he strengthens that which is weak, and confirms that which is feeble; wherein he comforts worm Jacob, and recompenseth vengeance to that which oppressed him, that which wounded him, that which bowed him down, that which closed his eye, stopped his ear, made him dumb and lame, hardened his heart from God's fear, &c. that nature, that wisdom, that spirit, that power, is visited with vengeance. That which emptied him of the good, and made

him desolate and solitary, is now smitten, distressed, and made solitary; and the prisoner of hope loosed, and brought out of the pit; and the blind eye opened, and the deaf ear unstopped, and the lame made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, and the parched ground become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; and that nature wherein dragons dwelt is now changed, and life dwells there; and the holy new earth brings forth her increase of life to the Lord, and the way of holiness is made plain; which rough Esau, or conceited Ishmael, or sacrificing Cain, (who hath not the true brotherly love in him) cannot come into; but holy Abel, blessed Isaac, plain Jacob, walked therein, and inherited the blessing; and the ransomed of the Lord return from all their desolations, captivities, and scatterings in the apostacy, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, where they obtain joy and gladness, and where sorrow and sighing flee away. For when the Comforter is come to the soul, when the Spirit from on high is poured out upon it, then the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest; then judgment dwells in the wilderness, and righteousness remains in the fruitful field; then righteousness is known, and the work thereof; and the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness, and assurance for ever. And the people of God then dwell (even his holy Israel, his spiritual Israel, the redeemed ones by his Spirit and power) in a peaceable hab-

tation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places, where their God is to them as a munition of rocks, and as broad rivers of love, righteousness, peace, joy, and blessedness for ever.

In the gospel state, the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, who is the teacher of his people in the new covenant, who teacheth them to profit therein, and leadeth them in the way that they should go: I say, in the gospel state he is known, and his voice hearkened to. "My sheep" (those whom I gather and redeem) "hear my voice, and follow me," saith Christ; who feed my flock like a shepherd, guiding them by my Spirit into fresh and green pastures, gathering my lambs with my arm, carrying them in my bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. Yea, I bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and lead them in paths they have not known. I make dark things light before them, and crooked things straight. These things do I unto them, and will not forsake them. Yea, worm Jacob, which was trampled upon by all, is now made a sharp threshing instrument having teeth, which thresheth the mountains (beating them small) and makes the hills as chaff, which fans them, and the wind carrieth them away, and the whirlwind scattereth them; but Jacob rejoiceth in his God, and glorieth in the Holy one of Israel; who openeth rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of vallies; and makes the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. For the Lord hath comforted Sion,

and had compassion on her waste place, and on her oppressed seed in Babylon; and hath said to the prisoners, "Go forth; and to them that sat in darkness, shew yourselves abroad in the light;" and he hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desart like the garden of the Lord; so that joy and gladness is found in her (even the joy of God's Spirit, which is unspeakable and full of glory,) with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody: for the destroyer, and those that made her waste, are gone forth of her, and great is the Holy One in the midst of her. So that the barren that did not bear sings; and she cries aloud, and breaks forth into singing, that did not travail with child; for she travails not now in vain, but also brings forth abundantly: so that more are the children of the desolate than of the formerly married wife. And how can it be otherwise? For the Maker is the husband, who hath made an everlasting covenant of peace with the soul in the Son of his love, and keeps and preserves in that covenant, where the Lord can never be wroth with the soul, nor rebuke it: for here all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and kept in his holy fear, and in subjection to his Spirit; and great is their peace, and in righteousness are they established, and are far from oppression, the terror whereof cannot come near them. [See Isaiah XLI. and LIV.]

There are three or four things yet more on my heart to mention concerning the gospel state.

First, In it the gospel fast is known; which is not to afflict the soul, or to hang down the head like a bulrush for a day; but to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to deal one's bread to the hungry ("to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and to keep one's self unspotted from the worldly spirit and nature, which defiles, and so not to touch the unclean thing.)

Then the light of the soul breaks forth as the morning, and its health springs forth speedily, and its righteousness goeth before it (for that which judgeth unrighteousness, that is its righteousness; which instead of coming after, to reprove and condemn, now goeth before,) and the glory of the Lord is the rear-ward, coming after to preserve and defend all that springs up in the power. Oh! blessed is he that witnesseth this state!

Secondly, In the gospel state the gospel sabbath is kept, and known to be God's holy day, and called a *delight* (the holy of the Lord, honourable,) and the Lord is honoured in it by the soul while it walketh not in its own ways, nor findeth its own pleasures, nor speaketh its own words: and then the soul delighteth itself in the Lord, who then, in this state, causeth it to ride on the high places of the earth, and feedeth it with the heritage of Jacob its father. What is that? What is Jacob's heritage? What is it Jacob is to be fed with, and inherit? Is it any less than the life and blessedness of the promised land? Is it any less than the hidden manna? Is it any

less than the fruit of the living vine? Is it any other than the sweetness and fatness of the true olive-tree?

Thirdly, In it the garment of salvation is put on, even the Lord Jesus Christ; for here the filthy garments are put off, and the pure garments put on. For here the Lord hath appointed to them that "have mourned in Sion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. So that here the soul can truly say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord hath caused righteousness and praise to spring forth before the eyes of all that are truly opened by him; and he will not draw back his arm, or put up the sword which he hath drawn, till he hath destroyed his adversaries, and laid waste the mount of Esau, and made his Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. *Amen, hallelujah!*

And here is the love which casteth out fear, and removeth care; so that they that dwell here are careful in nothing, but in every thing make their requests known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; "and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," guards the heart and mind, through

Christ Jesus. So that here God glorifieth the soul, changing it from glory to glory, in and by his Spirit; and God is praised and glorified in and by the soul, and the heart kept pure and chaste in the eye of the Lord; and the conversation ordered aright by his Spirit and power, in which the soul lives and walks, and his salvation seen and enjoyed daily more and more. So that here is a possession or inheritance of life in the kingdom, in the holy land of the living, of which there is no end. Everlasting endless prayers to the Holy One of Israel (whose tabernacle is with men, and who dwelleth in the midst of his people) for ever and ever.

Now if any one doubt concerning the truth of these things, this word is in my heart to such, *Come, and see.* Oh! come and see the glory of the Lord, and the power of his life, and righteousness of his kingdom, which is now revealed, after the long night of darkness! Oh! blessed, blessed be his name, who hath caused his light to shine, and opened the eye (which was once blind) to see it!

Quest. *But how may I come to see the glory of the gospel state?*

Ans. Come to the seed, and wait to feel and receive the power which raiseth the seed in the heart, and bringeth the heart, soul, mind, and spirit into union with the seed.

Quest. *But how may I come to the seed; and how may I wait aright to feel and receive the power which raiseth it?*

Ans. Mind that in thee which searcheth the heart, and what it reacheth to, and quickeneth

in thee; what it draweth thee from, what it draweth thee to; how it sheweth thee thine own inability to follow, and how it giveth ability when thou art weary of toiling and labouring of thyself. Oh! this is he whom we have waited for! Thus he appeared to us; thus he taught us to turn in, and to turn from the kingdom of darkness within, towards the kingdom of light, which the good seedsman had sown in us as a grain of mustard-seed; which when we found, we knew it to be the pearl of price, and were made willing to *sell all for it;* and now it is purchased, and also possessed in a good measure; blessed be the name of our merciful God, and tender Father, for ever and ever.

O hungering and thirsting soul after life (after truth, after the Lamb's righteousness,) do thou also wait to be taught of the Lord, who thus taught us, and then do thou go and do so likewise, and thou will never repent of this purchase, or of what thou partest with for it, when once thou comest to enjoy and possess any proportion of it.

The Lord make thee sensible of the visits, drawings, and leadings of his Holy Spirit, and guide thy feet thereby into the way of truth and peace. Amen.

EXTRACTS

From Treatises in Vol. II. p. 403, &c. and Vol. III. p. 825, &c. embracing a variety of Subjects;—placed together in the former, under the general title of "Some of the Mysteries of God's Kingdom glanced at."

CONCERNING THE WAY OF KNOWING CHRIST.

CHRIST is the Minister of the true sanctuary, which God hath pitched, and not man. There is a city, "whose builder and maker is God." The foundation-stone, the corner-stone, the top-stone of this city or building, is Christ. He therefore that would know Christ, and be built upon Christ, must find an holy thing revealed in his heart, and his soul built thereon by him, who alone can raise this building, who can rear up the tabernacle that hath long been fallen down, who can build up the old waste places, and restore the paths for the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk and travel on in.

Now he which can find any thing of God built up in his heart, (yea, if he can find but the beginning of the true sanctuary) he may also find Christ ministering there; even the true high-priest offering up the sacrifices, and interceding with the Father; as also giving the soul the food of the holy things to eat of. Now this is the way of Christ indeed; to wit, in his begettings in the heart, in his presence there, in his ministrations there, between the soul and the Father. And he that thus know-

eth him, even in that which is begotten of him, watching in singleness of heart with the true eye, cannot be deceived concerning him, but knoweth the voice of his Spirit, and readily embraceth it; but a stranger or deceiver it knoweth not, and will not hear, but by the instinct of life turneth from it. So that the knowledge and preservation of the sheep is not by the wise reasonings of the mind concerning the shepherd's voice and the stranger's voice; but by an instinct of the new hidden nature, which teacheth the simple-hearted to avoid the snares which the earthly wisdom is easily entangled in. The meek, the humble, the broken-hearted, the weak, the poor, the babes, the little children, these are they whom the Father teacheth; these have that preservation and instruction, which the wise, knowing, judicious minds (in man's account) miss of. Thus *the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God stronger than man.* And God hath chosen in every man *that which is not*, to bring to nought *all that is* in him, that no flesh might glory in his presence, nor no man be able to boast before the Lord of the salvation of his soul.

CONCERNING FAITH.

What is faith?

Ans. It is a belief in the appearances of the Lord to the soul, and a cleaving to, and drinking in of their virtue. There are divers appearances of the Lord, even as a quickening

Spirit, quickening and enlivening the soul; also as a discoverer, reprover, and condemner of sin, and justifier of righteousness; likewise as a strengthener and comforter of that which wants his strength and comfort; and as a fountain of perfect love, sweetness, and of all good, &c. Now however the Lord pleaseth to appear, that which seeth, knoweth, owneth, and falleth in with his appearances, drinking in the virtue thereof, that is faith.

By what means is faith wrought?

Ans. By the Word in the heart; by the living Word from which the soul came, and which is nigh to the soul. This was the Word of faith, or the Word which wrought faith under the law. Deut. xxx. This was the Word of faith which the apostles preached, and which wrought faith under the gospel. Rom. x. This is the Word which we feel working faith in us now; yea, and which worketh it in all those in whomsoever it is wrought; though they may not know what works it: yea, this is the seed of life, from which every spiritual thing springs and grows in the heart.

[*How doth this Word work in or upon the heart?*

Ans. According to the entrance it gets into the heart, or according as it is rejected or refused. As it gets entrance, it works life there, and works the creature into its life. It brings in its nature, its righteousness, its holiness, its sweetness, its peace, its love, its joy, its meekness, its patience, &c. as it makes room in the heart, by working out the contrary. But

where it is rejected, it works death and condemnation, and increaseth the captivity and misery of the soul; so that it were better never to hear any sound of Christ in the heart, than not to hearken and become subject thereto.]

How is faith received?

Ans. In the quickening power. The seed of life shoots forth its light, its life, its nature, its virtue into the heart. The heart being touched with this, is in some measure quickened towards God, and in and from this quickening virtue faith flows into the soul. For in the death of sin, in the dead state, there is nothing but unbelief; faith therefore must needs flow from the quickenings of life.

Wherein doth faith stand?

Ans. In that wherein it is received, even in the quickening power. Faith must be continually kept alive by the seed of life, or it cannot live. It springs in the power, it dwells in the power, it acts in the power, and is never found out of it. Man cannot believe when he will; it is a continual gift, depending upon the continual quickenings and nourishment of that life from whence it sprang.

But doth not God withdraw? Where is faith then?

Ans. There is the secret presence of the power, when it is not visibly manifest, enabling the soul to keep to, and depend upon, that which is not seen, but trusted in, though unseen, and not sensibly felt: and there is a secret turning from, and resisting of temptations, and a secret overcoming (the heart be-

ing kept true and entire to the Lord) while the enemy seemeth sensibly to prevail and overcome.

Why doth the enemy so assault with unbelief, and fight so stiffly against the faith of the soul?

Ans. Because all depends upon it. Stop that, he stops all; overcome that, he overcomes all. If that stand and abide in strength, he gains nothing; but loses by every temptation and seeming victory.

CONCERNING HOPE.

What is hope?

Ans. The expectation of somewhat from the Lord, in the season of his good will. The expectation of the crown of life at last; the expectation of deliverance from snares and temptations at present; the expectation of receiving his promises of the divine nature, or of any mercy or blessing which he hath given to pray for; this is hope.

What is the nature and proper effects of hope?

Ans. It stays the mind, even in the midst of storms and tempests, that they do not overturn, overwhelm, and sink the soul. It keeps up the head above the many waters, and keeps the heart from utterly fainting. It preserves life in the many famines and straight sieges of the enemy. Hope of relief keeps from yielding to the enemy, and preserves from distrusting the Lord. Distrust cannot enter and prevail, where hope abides. Hope

adds strength to the soul in its pursuit of all that is good, and in its flying from and eschewing all that is evil, and is the succourer of faith in the needful hour: yea, how often would the faith be given up and foiled, were it not for the hope which relieves it!

CONCERNING LOVE.

What is love?

Ans. What shall I say of it, or how shall I in words express its nature! It is the sweetness of life; it is the sweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his seed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature most like unto himself, both in nature and operation. It fulfils the law, it fulfils the gospel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneness. It excludes all evil out of the heart, it perfects all good in the heart. A touch of love doth this in measure; perfect love doth this in fulness. But how can I proceed to speak of it! Oh! that the souls of all that fear and wait on the Lord might feel its nature fully; and then would they not fail of its sweet overcoming operations, both towards one another, and towards enemies. The great healing, the great conquest, the great salvation is reserved for the full manifestation of the love of God. His judgments, his cuttings, his hewings by the word of his mouth, are but to prepare for, but not to do, the great work of raising up the sweet building of his life, which is to be done

in love, and in peace, and by the power thereof. And this my soul waits and cries after, even the full springing up of eternal love in my heart, and in the swallowing of me wholly into it, and the bringing of my soul wholly forth in it, that the life of God in its own perfect sweetness may fully run forth through this vessel, and not be at all tinctured by the vessel, but perfectly tincture and change the vessel into its own nature; and then shall no fault be found in my soul before the Lord, but the spotless life be fully enjoyed by me, and become a perfectly-pleasant sacrifice to my God.

Oh! how sweet is love! how pleasant is its nature! how takingly doth it behave itself in every condition, upon every occasion, to every person, and about every thing! How tenderly, how readily, doth it help and serve the meanest! How patiently, how meekly, doth it bear all things, either from God or man, how unexpectedly soever they come, or how hard soever they seem! How doth it believe, how doth it hope, how doth it excuse, how doth it cover even that which seemeth not to be excusable, and not fit to be covered! How kind is it even in its interpretations and charges concerning miscarriages! It never overchargeth, it never grates upon the spirit of him whom it reprehends; it never hardens, it never provokes; but carrieth a meltingness and power of conviction with it. This is the nature of God; this, in the vessels capacitated to receive and bring it forth in its glory, the power of enmity is not able to stand against, but falls before, and is overcome by.

CONCERNING OBEDIENCE.

What is obedience?

Ans. It is the subjection of the soul to the law of the Spirit; which subjection floweth from, and is strengthened by, love. To wait to know the mind of God, and perform his will in every thing, through the virtue of the principle of life revealed within, this is the obedience of faith. This is the obedience of the seed, conveyed into the creature by the seed, as it is made partaker of the seed. He is the son who naturally doth the will; he is the faithful witness who testifies concerning the will; yea, and he is the choice servant also.

[If I could obey in all things that God requires of me, yet that would not satisfy me, unless I felt my obedience flow from the birth of his life in me. "My Father doth all in me," saith Christ. This was Christ's comfort. And to feel Christ do all in the soul, is the comfort of every one that truly believes in him.

True obedience, gospel obedience, is natural to the birth which is born of God. It is unnatural to the flesh, to man's wisdom, to deny himself, and take up the cross; but it is natural to the birth which is born of God's Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit;" and it is natural to it to be conversant in, and exercised about, that which is spiritual.——Honouring and pleasing, and answering the will of the Lord, is the proper aim of the truly obedient. Oh! how do they delight to do the will of God! "I have meat,"

saith Christ, "that ye know not of." To do the will was his meat and drink: and it is meat and drink to all that are of his nature and Spirit. If I should never have any other reward, but the pleasure of obedience; yet I could not but say and testify, that in answering the law of the pure life, in keeping the holy statutes and commandments of God's Spirit, there is great reward. But yet there is a crown also, and a reaping after this life of every thing that is sown to the Spirit; and the crown is weighty and everlastingly glorious.

Gospel obedience is exceedingly necessary in and to the gospel state. Mark! *The Lamb is the leader:* and can any be saved by him, but they that follow him? When Christ calls out of the world, must not the soul come to him, who is the Shepherd? And must not the sheep daily learn to know his voice, and follow him; even till they come to be acquainted with every moving, drawing, and leading of his Spirit; and so come to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes? Mark! what a weight Christ layeth upon doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Why then the disciple cannot come to happiness, but in the doing, in the obeying of the will of Christ, his Lord and Master.]

Mark how every thing in the kingdom, every spiritual thing, refers to Christ, and centers in him. His nature, his virtue, his presence, his power makes up all. Indeed he is all in all to a believer, only variously manifested and opened in the heart by the Spirit.

He is the volume of the whole book, every leaf and line whereof speaks of him, and writes out him in some or other of his sweet and beautiful lineaments. So that if I should yet speak farther of other things, as of meekness, tenderness, humility, mercy, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, contentedness, &c. (all which I had much rather should be read in his book, even in the living book of the eternal Word, than in my writings) I should but speak further of his nature brought up, manifested, and displaying itself in and through the creatures, by his turning the wheel of his life in their hearts. But my spirit hasteneth from words, therefore can I not but cut short and pass over these openings in me, that neither my own soul nor others may fix or stay upon words concerning the thing, but may sink in spirit into the feeling of the life itself, and may learn what it is to enjoy it there, and to be comprehended of it, and cease striving to know or comprehend concerning it. And then I am sure he that hath a taste of this cannot but be willing to sell all the knowledge that can be held in the creaturely vessel, for that knowledge which is living, and is laid up in that treasury, into which the thief and corrupter can by no means steal or break.

Yet somewhat I cannot but further add—because my heart believeth that it may prove serviceable to some, in the guidance and mercy of the good Spirit of the Lord.

CONCERNING REGENERATION.

What is regeneration, or the new birth?

Ans. It is an inward change, by the Spirit and power of the living God, into his own nature. It is a being begotten of his Spirit, born of his Spirit; begotten into, and born of the very nature of his Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." John iii. It is not every change of mind which is the right change; but only that, which God, by the very same power wherewith he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave, makes in the hearts of those whom he visits; who are sensible of, receive, and are subject to his inward life, light, and power.

CONCERNING TRUE HOLINESS.

What is true holiness?

Ans. That holy nature, and those holy actions, which arise from the holy root; all else are but imitations of holiness, not the true holiness. The tree must be made good first, and then the fruit will be good also. There are many likenesses of the true holiness up and down in several professions; but there is no real holiness to be found, nor righteousness neither, but in the trees of God's planting, in the branches which are by him ingrafted into the true vine and olive-tree, whose strength of virtue and holiness lies in the sap, which they daily receive from him.

CONCERNING MAKING OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE.

How may a man make his calling and election sure?

Ans. By making the gift of God sure to him; by making that sure to him wherein his calling and election is. For the choice is of the seed, the holy seed, the inward seed, the seed of God's Spirit, and of the creature as joined to the seed. God would have none to perish; but would have all come to the knowledge of Christ the truth, who is the seed, in whom the election stands: and his holy advice to men is, whom he begins to call and to lead towards the election, "to make their calling and election sure." So that the way of making the calling and election sure is, to make the gift sure, the seed sure, the leaven sure, the pearl sure, which God will never reject, nor any that are found in true union with it, and in the love and obedience of it. Oh! therefore, as God visits with power, with his powerful gift, and as thou receivest power, dominion, and authority over sin, (for in this gift is God's dominion and authority revealed) be faithful to the gift, be faithful to the power, give up to the truth in the inward parts, come into it, dwell in it, that thou mayst feel its virtue and delivering nature from every enslaving and embondaging thing, and then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ the Lord, by the life, virtue, and power

of his truth, sets thee free. And so here thou wilt read thy calling, and read thy election day by day; and find them sealed, and sure to thee, in that truth, in that gift, in that heavenly light, in that holy seed, which came from God, and is of him, and which he delights to own, and will never reject.

CONCERNING REPENTANCE.

Which is the true repentance?

Ans. That which Christ gives, whom God hath exalted to be the Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Acts v. 31. It is not in man's power [as man] to repent; his heart is hard and impenitent. It is God's power which melteth, tendereth, and changeth the heart. So that there is a great difference between the sense and sorrow of man's nature, and the sense and sorrow which God gives to the heart which he renews and changes. The one is of an earthly, the other of a heavenly nature. The one is like the early dew, or morning cloud, it soon passeth away; the other is written in the new heart, and abideth. So that in it there is a real sorrow and mourning over the corrupt nature, and all the dead works of the flesh, and a turning from them, and meddling no more with them. This is the repentance of the renewed ones, which is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, and is a godly sorrow for sin not to be repented of.

CONCERNING POVERTY OF SPIRIT AND HUMILITY.

Which is the right poverty of spirit and the true humility?

Ans. That poverty and humility of spirit which springeth from the same root from which the faith, the love, the peace, the joy, and the other heavenly things arise; and is of the same nature. There is a voluntary humility, and a voluntary poverty, even of spirit, which man casts himself into, and forms in himself, by his own workings and reasonings. This is not the true, but the false image, or counterfeit of the true; but then there is a poverty which ariseth from God's emptying the creature, from God's stripping the creature; and an humility which ariseth from a new heart and nature. This is of the right kind, and is lasting, and abides in the midst of the riches and glory of the kingdom. For as Christ was poor in spirit before his Father, and lowly in heart in the midst of all the fulness which he received from him; so it is with those who are of the same birth and nature with Christ. They are filled with humility, and clothed with humility, in the midst of all the graces and heavenly riches which God fills them and adorns them with. Keep in the faith, keep in the truth, keep in the light, keep in the power; it excludes boasting in or after the flesh, and keeps the mind in that humility and poverty of spirit which God hath brought, and daily further and further brings it into; and so the humility and poverty remains (poor

in spirit for ever, humble in spirit for ever, nothing before the Lord for ever) even as that remains which brought into that frame, and keeps in that frame for ever. And so the Lord of life is only exalted, and the creature kept abased before him, and low for ever; and is nothing but as the Lord pleaseth to fill, and make it to be what it is. So what I am, I am by God's love, by his grace, by his mercy, by his goodness, by his power, by his wisdom, by his righteousness, by his holiness, which he of his own good pleasure communicateth, and causeth to spring in me, and filleth and clotheth me with, as seemeth good in his sight.

CONCERNING THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM.

Concerning the seed of the kingdom, this I have experienced; that it consists not in words or notions of the mind, but is an inward thing, an inward spiritual substance in the heart, as real inwardly in its kind, as other seeds are outwardly in their kind; and that being received by faith, and taking root in man, (his heart, his earth, being ploughed up and prepared for it) it groweth up inwardly, and bringeth forth fruit inwardly, as truly and really as any outward seed doth outwardly. This seed is known by its contrariety and enmity against the seed of the serpent; against all the seeds of evil in the hearts of men; it discovering them, turning the mind from them, and warring against

them, and bruising and overcoming them in all that receive it, and let in its holy nature; which, as an holy leaven or salt, worketh out that which is unholy and unrighteous, dark and dead, and seasoneth with light, with life, with grace, with the holiness and righteousness of truth.

CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION,

Some things which it hath pleased the Lord, in his tender mercy, to give me to experience.

That it is the same Christ, the same Spirit, the same life, the same wisdom, the same power, the same goodness, love, and mercy, the same water, the same blood, which both justifies and sanctifies.

That justification and sanctification go hand in hand together. There is none justified, but he that is in measure sanctified: and there is none sanctified, but he that is in some measure justified.

That justification and sanctification are both of and through the grace. It is so in the beginning, and it is so all along. "By grace ye are saved," saith the apostle. The whole work of salvation is begun and carried on through grace. It is through that, God visits and reaches to the soul, with his quickening virtue and power. He regenerates also thereby. Through that he justifies; through that he sanctifies, &c. So that as the work goes on, grace, grace, is to be cried to him that does the work, from his very laying the foundation,

and fastening the soul thereupon, to his very laying on of the top stone.

Though justification and sanctification be of God's grace and mercy in Christ; yet this doth not exclude faith: but they are also through faith, and not without it. God doth not justify man in the unbelieving state, in the dead state, in his abiding there; but in the coming out of it, in the repenting and turning from the dead works to the living God, and in believing in him; and so he also sanctifies him.

Faith and obedience are of the same nature, and always go together. So that wherever there is faith, there is obedience likewise; and wherever there is obedience, there is faith. Obedience flows from faith, and cannot be without it; for the very nature and virtue of faith is in it. And faith is obedience. For this is the command of God, that the soul believe on him (and in his appearances) whom he hath sent to save; and this believing is obedience unto him that commands it. And this faith, and this obedience, is holy and just in God's sight; and through it (but not without it) the soul is both justified and sanctified.

That the works of faith, the works of the new life, are not the works of the law, the works of the old covenant; nor are excluded justification, as the works of the old covenant are. For I have found the Lord, who hath condemned and excluded all my doings, which ever I have been able to do of myself, still justify and accept what his Spirit and holy power hath done in me. They are not of the

same nature in themselves; nor are they so accounted of in the eye of the Lord. For the Lord distinguisheth between root and root: and what springeth from the holy root, he justifieth as holy; and what ariseth from the unholy root, he condemneth as unholy.

That by the law of faith all boasting is excluded, in the whole work both of justification and sanctification. What is the law of faith? Is not this its law, to derive all from the Son, to do all in the Son? to quit self, and its own ability, and to perform all in the newness of the Spirit, in the ability which is of God, given and continued, in and through his grace and mercy, to the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ; all the veins of life, all the streams of the new covenant run here. Here is no boasting of the creature; here can be no boasting: for all its ability and strength is shut out; and that which is given of God to it, is all and doth all. Yet every Jew here hath praise of God. His faith is commended, his love is commended, his faithfulness is commended, his zeal for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord, his patience in suffering, is commended, &c. But the praise and honour of all redounds not to his flesh, but to the Spirit and grace of God in him. So that here flesh is laid low, and kept in the dust for ever, and God alone exalted in this day of his pure power in the heart. He that truly believeth, entereth into rest. How into rest? From what doth he rest? Why, from his own works, from the works of the flesh; yea, from the works of the old covenant; from the works that arise

from his own ability, from the works wherein he can never be justified with the gospel-justification. But doth he cease from the works of faith? Doth he cease from the labour of love? Doth he cease from obedience to any thing that God requires? Nay: then surely he rather beginneth to work and labour in the vineyard; and his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

[*But many men do not know Christ, and how can they obtain justification by him?*

Ans. There is a double knowledge of Christ; outwardly, by a relation concerning him, and inwardly, by feeling the virtue of his nature. Now thus many know Christ, who know him not outwardly. They may have somewhat sown, touched, and raised by God, of the nature of Christ in them, and in this they may know the Father, and spring of the same nature, and be gathered in heart into it, and so come within the line or compass of the spiritual life, wherein the spiritual blessings and mercies run and flow through Christ, and for his sake. And so here they may see their sins, and be loaded with them, and feel the life and virtue that washeth from them, and that it is in the mere mercy of God, and so be drawn out of self into the nature, life, virtue, and power of Christ, which is conveyed in substance in the inward feeling and new-creating of the heart.——The promise is to the seed of the kingdom, and to man in the seed; and there it reacheth him whenever it findeth him: for in all his gatherings into, and being found in, that, he is blessed.

Then may a man be justified who never heard outwardly of Christ?

Ans. If he feel the seed of life, be overcome by its nature, give up to its law, as it is made manifest in his heart, abhor the nature and law of sin and death, and thus in soul cleave unto the Lord, and follow him as he pleaseth to lead, the Spirit and life of the Lord cannot but herein justify him; and the grace and mercy of the Lord cannot withhold giving him out his pardon for his sins past, (and also pass by his future frailties,) although he distinctly know not how to sue out and plead it. The redemption and pardon of sin is through the unlimited grace of God; which is not restrained to the outward knowledge of the creature, but issueth forth according to the capacity that God creates any where to receive it. Life, mercy, grace, pardon, &c. issue forth from God into the vessels of every kind, under every dispensation that he prepareth for them: and the inward sense of life is the thing that God aims at in all his dispensations, and not the outward skill or knowledge, but thrusts that by in every dispensation, except as his inward life and virtue is found in it.]

CONCERNING THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

This I have experienced concerning the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is an inward and spiritual thing, producing inward and spiritual effects in the mind; and that this is it, even that which slays the enmity in the

mind, and crucifies to the world, and the affections thereof. "God forbid," said the apostle, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Now mark; That which is contrary to the world, and crucifies to the world, that is the cross. The cross hath this power, and nothing else; and so there is nothing else to glory in. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other." Mind, here is the cross: the Spirit which is contrary to the flesh, which mortifies the flesh, through the obedience whereof the flesh is crucified. "If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Whatsoever is of and in the Spirit, is contrary to the flesh. The light of the Spirit is contrary to the darkness of the flesh. The holiness of the Spirit is contrary to the unholiness of the corrupt heart. The life of the Spirit is contrary to the life (or rather death) that is in sin. The power of the Spirit is contrary to the power that is in Satan, and his kingdom. The wisdom of God is contrary, and a foolish thing, to the wisdom of man. Yea, the new creature, which springs from God's Holy Spirit, is contrary and death to the old. Now he that comes hither, out of his own wisdom, out of his own will, out of his own thoughts, out of his own reasonings; and comes to a discerning of God's Spirit, and to the feeling of his begetting of life in his heart, and his stirrings and movings in the life which he hath begot-

ten; and waits here, and receives counsel here; he is taught to deny himself, and to join to and take up that, by which Christ daily crosseth and subdueth in him that which is contrary to God.

And here is the fight of faith, and the good travel under the cross, whereby the holy journey is gone, and the enemies (which rise up to oppose in the way) vanquished and overcome. For here is the power revealed; the preserving power, the leading power, the conquering power of him who rideth on conquering and to conquer his spiritual enemies in the hearts of his children, who know his voice, and are subject to him; who daily denying themselves, and taking up his cross, follow him. Woe is to them that are at ease in Sion, under any thing that is contrary to God; but blessings are upon them whose dwelling is under the cross, and who know no ease but what it allows. It will make truth, life, holiness, righteousness, faith, obedience, meekness, patience, love, separation from sin, communion with the Lord, and all the fruits of the Spirit, as natural to them in the renewed state, as ever sin was in the corrupt state. And in that state they shall be able to say with Paul; who once complained of his captivity, and that he did what he hated; yet after he had known the power of the cross, and was crucified with Christ, he could then do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; yea, then being a conquerer, having overcome the enemies which stood in his way, he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. The cause of

so many complaints and bowings down of the head, and going mourning because of the prevailings of the enemy, through temptations, sin, and corruption, is because the cross of Christ, which is the power of God, (which is his ordinance against the strength of the enemy) is either not known, or not taken up. And this is the reason that many that make a fair shew for a while, yet afterwards come to nothing, (but are like untimely figs, or like corn upon the house-tops, which hastily springeth up, but soon withereth) because they either never rightly learn, or keep not to the cross. For that alone hath power from God to bring down and keep down that which is contrary to him. So that from under the cross of Christ, there is no witnessing salvation or preservation from the Lord; but out of the limits of the cross, the enemy hath power to recover and bring back under his dominion again. And whosoever in his travels leaves the cross behind him, does draw back unto perdition, and not travel on, in the living faith, and newness of obedience, towards the salvation of the soul.

CONCERNING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE, AND THE MYSTERY OF THE FELLOWSHIP THEREIN.

God is hid from man, as he lies in his sinful and fallen state; and no man can find or know him, but as he pleaseth to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ, being God's image, there is no knowing or

confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 3.—When he appeared in the days of his flesh, flesh and blood could not reveal him, but only the Father. And he is the same to-day as he was yesterday. He is not to be known now, but in the same Spirit; in his own grace and truth, in a measure of his own life. The dead cannot know him; they only know him, who are his sheep, who are quickened and made alive by him. And this life is a mystery: none can understand it, but they that partake of it. Can a man that is naturally dead, know what the life of nature means? No more can a man that is spiritually dead, know what the life of the Spirit means. The natural man may get the words that came from life, and cry up them, and speak great words of the fame of wisdom, and of her children; but the thing itself is hid from them all. Oh! it is a straight gate at which the birth enters, at which none else can enter. The wise and prudent knowers and searchers after the flesh (and of the scriptures, as they can put meanings upon them and comprehend them) are shut out in every age; but there is a babe born of naked truth (born of the pure simplicity) admitted by God, while men disdain and despise it.

And the fellowship of the saints is in the life, and in the light, which is this mystery. The fellowship is not outward, but inward. All they that meet together in the outward place, are not in the fellowship, or worship; but only they that meet together in the inward

life and Spirit. "They that worship the Father, must worship him in Spirit and truth." Look, there is the worship, there are the worshippers; they that are in the Spirit, in the truth; they that meet in the Spirit, in the truth, they meet together in the one spiritual place, as I may call it. And so we own no man after the flesh, no man according to the appearance; but in the righteous judgment of the Spirit, those only who are of the Spirit. Indeed we are tender, where there is the least beginning of the work of God in any heart; yea, where there is but so much as a conviction of the understanding; but men are not presently of us, who own our principle in words or outward appearance, but only such as are inwardly changed thereby in the heart. It is true, persons may walk among us, and afterwards go out from us, who were never of us, (as it was in the apostles' days) that were never in the fellowship of life with us, whom we could never own in the sight of the Lord, as being born of him; though we were willing to wait and watch for their good, that they might come to witness the true birth. Now from such come the offences, even from the falling off of such as never were truly ingrafted, and also from the slips of such who are not watchful to that which preserves. And woe is to the world, because of the offences which cannot but come. For they which are to be approved in the sight of the Lord, must not somewhat or other happen to make them manifest? And when they are made manifest, the world's eye is offended, and is apt to think

hardly of, and reproach the truth itself, because of them. Blessed is the eye which sees into the mystery, into the life itself, where there is no offence. Truth is one and the same for ever.

CONCERNING JUDGING ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE, AND JUDGING RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT.

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." John vii. 24.

What is it to judge according to the appearance? and what is it to judge righteous judgment? I shall speak what I have experienced, having been deeply exercised about this thing. Mark then:

The holy Spirit of life breatheth upon the heart; and, by his breathing and working there, he quickens and begets life. John iii. 8. And that which is begotten and born of him, is begotten and born in his nature, and so is of the same nature with him, as verse 6, of that chapter.

Now to that which is born of the Spirit, the Spirit is the leader, the preserver, the supporter, the comforter, the daily quickener. He can do nothing without the Spirit, without the present life and power of him that begat him: so that all the judgment which the birth of life hath, is from, and of, and in the Holy Spirit of the Father.

And here is true judgment, both concerning righteousness, and against all unrighteousness; so that keep to the life, keep to the

Spirit, keep to the birth, keep to the power, then is the wisdom and righteous judgment of God revealed: but any that go out of this, and measure without this, they measure in the unrighteousness; and though they search the scriptures, and think in themselves they measure from the scriptures, yet they are mistaken, and measure but from their own knowledge and apprehensions upon the scriptures, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, when they seemed to conclude, upon searching the scriptures, that Christ could not be the Messiah. John vii. 52. "Search and look, (said they) for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." How then can this Galilean be he? See by the scriptures if this can be the Christ.

It is said of Christ, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge," &c. Isa. xi. 3, 4. Christ judged righteous judgment. How came he to judge so? Why; he judged in and with the Spirit. He kept to the Spirit's judgment. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and made him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, ver. 2, 3. And no man can judge aright concerning the things of God, but in and by the same Spirit. How shall I know whether my duties be right, my prayers right, my ways right, my worship right, my faith right, my hope of the right kind, my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures right, &c.? Why there is none but one can determine. He who begetteth life, knows whether that which is in thee be from his life; and

whether that which thou offerest to him, be truly living or no: and when the Lord separates the living from the dead, what will remain in many that make great professions at this day?

I would have no man mistaken about these things; I know many are deeply mistaken, as their own hearts will one day acknowledge, when the Lord shall make manifest to them, how they have called evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Indeed it is just as it was in the days of Christ's appearing outwardly in a body of flesh. The same life, the same Spirit, is denied now as was then. Then the Jews cried up Christ to come; but they then spiritually saw him not. They saw the flesh, (or outward form) but they saw not him who dwelt in that flesh. And though the world of Christians now acknowledge Christ is come, and did appear, yet neither do they know him who did appear, but deny his life, his Spirit, his virtue, his power, which is revealed in this day of his love and goodness to the eyes of the children of the true wisdom. *Oh! let not flesh judge: be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, and cease judging, for he is arisen to judge. He is Judge in the midst of his people, and he will judge the heathen also.*

And every one bring this near. Wait to feel flesh judged in thee, and brought down in thee, that it may not judge in thee; but Spirit and life may be exalted, and sit upon the throne in thy heart: and when life is exalted, and doth begin to judge, Oh! take heed of

hearkening to the flesh, of letting in the judgment of flesh afterwards, lest the Spirit be grieved and quenched! For the wisdom of the flesh is near, and will be striving to get in and recover its seat again; and if the watch be not singly kept to God's Holy Spirit, somewhat else will be judging in thee, which will judge according to the appearance of things to thy mind, and so thou wilt miss of the true and righteous judgment of God's Spirit.

A QUESTION ANSWERED ABOUT KNOWING GOD'S SPIRIT.

How shall I know God's Spirit? How shall I know the motions thereof? How may I know whether the faith and hope in my heart be from him? Whether my prayers and desires arise thence, &c.

Ans. No man of himself, or by any way he of himself can take, can know God's Spirit: there must first be a capacity given before any man can know the Spirit of the Lord; his life, his power, must first be felt, and somewhat quickened, somewhat formed by him, somewhat begotten of him, which is Spirit, and this can know him. Now man in this may know him, but out of this can never know him. Therefore this is the great skill, and diligence, and wisdom of a Christian, to keep to this, to wait for this, to have his eye toward the pure spring of wisdom, that, when it springs, he may discern and receive it; and when that which is of a contrary nature

springs, he may discern it under all its deceitful appearances, and turn from it. For out of the heart are the issues both of life and death. There is all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness in the unrighteous nature, in the unrighteous spirit; and if the watch be not diligently kept, it is easy to be deceived at any time: but the true seed, the holy seed, the living seed, the elect seed, the immortal seed, is never deceived. Oh! blessed are they who have their eyes opened and kept open in it, to discern the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity, that they may be preserved safe in the one, out of the reach of the other!

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM,

In which the kingdom itself is contained, (as the nature and substance of things is contained in the seed thereof) and out of which it springeth up and ariseth in the heart.

What is that seed which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 9. which remaineth in those that are born of God, and preserveth out of sin those that are led by it and comprehended in it? Is it not the seed of the kingdom?

Do not the natural herbs and flowers, the natural plants and trees, grow from a natural seed? Do not the spiritual plants, the spiritual trees, the trees of righteousness, grow from the seed of righteousness?

Was it not the great doctrine of Christ to preach the kingdom? and how did he preach

it? Did he not preach it as a seed, as a grain of mustard-seed? and did he not liken this spiritual seed to leaven, to a precious pearl, to treasure hid in a field, to a piece of silver lost, &c. Oh! how happy is he who knows and enjoys the thing itself which Christ preached! All the prophets prophesied concerning him; and when he came, this was his doctrine, that men should mind this, look after this, purchase this, possess this, feel this planted and grow up in them, and themselves ingrafted into and growing up in it.

Can any man be born of God, and not born of this seed? Can any man be born of this seed, and not be born of God?

How doth grace and truth come by Jesus Christ? Doth it not grow up from this seed? Can it grow up any other way in any heart?

Is not salvation felt and witnessed in every heart (of those that are in any measure redeemed) as this seed grows up and overshadows them? Was not this the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, 1 Pet. i. 10. whereof the apostle Peter himself was made a partaker? chap. v. 10. In the law were the shadows of good things to come; but in the gospel the substance, the seed itself, is revealed.

Is it not the right beginning in religion to begin in the Spirit? and can any begin in the Spirit, but he that begins in and with the seed of the kingdom?

Is it not the main and chief thing in religion to know, and to feel this, to be joined to, and abide in this seed?

Is not all that flows from this seed true and certain! Is not the knowledge certain here? the faith here? the love here? the peace here? the joy here? the righteousness here? From this true root, can there grow or shoot forth any thing but that which is true? Oh! every breathing here is from pure life, and precious in the eye of the Father. Is there any certainty elsewhere? Oh! when the Lord appears, will he not disown all the religion and worship which is not of this growth?

But some may say, How may I know this seed, and how may I be joined to it?

Ans. In the quickening life mayest thou know it, and no where else. Didst thou ever feel that which quickened thy heart towards the Lord? Therein and thereby, at that time, thou mayest feel an eye and heart opened, which can truly see and know somewhat of God: and, keeping thy eye to the quickening power of God, as that stirs, moves and operates, in thee and upon thee, thou mayest know again and know more.

Therefore eye the power which quickens, and eye the seed which it reveals and raiseth in thee, and wait to feel the power subjecting thee to the seed, that thou mayest come under it, and it may come over thee, and press down in thee all that is contrary to its pure nature.

And as thou comest hither, thou wilt find that which death hath no power over; and, as thou abidest there, thou shalt find it to have no power over thee. For, of a truth, in the holy covenant of life and peace, death never had nor can have power; but he who abideth

in him who is the covenant, who is the Shepherd, who is the love, who is the wisdom and power of God, witnesseth there a sure defence and strong tower, where salvation is for a wall and bulwark against the enemy.

There are many sorts of talkers concerning the thing, but there are few travellers into it; but he alone who is a true traveller into it, and takes up his rest there, certainly knows and can truly witness what is to be found there.——Blessed is he that knows and stumbles not at the appearances of the seed and power of life in his own heart, but is turned from the darkness to the light there, and from the power of Satan to the manifestation of God's Spirit there. For the end of words (even of Christ's own directions in the days of his flesh) is to turn men to the holy life and power from whence the words came; and thither man is to travel, and therein to center, waiting on the Lord, in the way of his judgments and tender mercies, to witness a translation from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the dear Son; which kingdom is at first but as a grain of mustard-seed, and must be so known and so received.

And now let every serious heart examine concerning himself. Dost thou know the kingdom? Is the seed grown in thee? doth it overspread thee? Art thou in it as in a kingdom? dost thou feel it overshadowing thee? art thou in unity with it? doth it speak peace to thee from the Lord? Is the wall of partition broken down in thee? Is there of twain made

one new man? Dost thou feel that which is contrary to Christ subdued in thee by his power? and his holy nature, life, and Spirit, reigning over it? Canst thou read that scripture sensibly and experimentally, "If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live?"

Ah! how miserably do men talk of Christ, the power of God, and miss of the effect and work of his power in them!

Faith is a powerful thing, it gives victory, (true faith gives victory) it scatters that which stands between, and gives real access to God, and lets in his pure, fresh, living virtue, upon the heart.

Love is a powerful thing, it constrains to obedience: and the heart that is circumcised to love the Lord God, Oh! how doth life flow from him into it!

Oh! away with empty notions, and come to the ministration of the Spirit, where the knowledge is living, the faith victorious, the love pure and undefiled, the worship truly spiritual, even flowing from, and comprehended in, the life and virtue of the Spirit. Oh! that all that truly breathe after the Lord, might be gathered hither, found here, and dwell here. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

Persons that have had some true touches of life, and true breathings after the Lord, yet not having their eye fixed rightly upon him, nor discerning from whence those come, may easily lose the true sense of life, and another birth of another nature spring up in them instead thereof. This was it we generally wanted in the day of our former profession, even the discerning of that, and fixing upon that, which begat life in us; through want thereof, many of the most tender-hearted came to a loss; whom the Lord at length shewed mercy to, manifesting to them the light of their eyes, and the stay of their souls. Now to all that have been gathered hither by the Lord, life hath been renewed, and their former experiences (of the Lord and his goodness to them in the Lord Jesus Christ) restored again with advantage. And here they sensibly see, and daily experience, that nothing is of their own works, but all of grace and mercy in and through Christ, in whom they are created unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them. And here the glory is revealed; the glory of life, the glory of peace with the Lord, the glory of righteousness in and through his Son, the glory of victory over the soul's enemies, and of leading captivity captive, and treading upon the necks of kings, even of mighty lusts, which mightily prevailed over and oppressed the soul, before the Captain of our salvation appeared in the

power and authority of his own Spirit. But blessed be the Lord, there is not only this glory revealed, but there is a defence over the glory; for there is that revealed which is able to defend it, and doth defend it, in the hearts of many, and in the living assemblies which have been gathered by God's holy power; which holy power (which gathered) daily quickens and overshadows, and is a rock unto, and will be so for ever, even to all that abide with him in his holy covenant; but out of the limits of that into which God gathers, and wherein and whereby he preserves, there is no defence to any. The cursed thing, the unclean thing, the earthly spirit, the earthly mind and wisdom, the Lord hath excluded, and it is to be excluded out of his camp for evermore, that the inward Israel may be kept holy to the Lord, and may serve and worship the Lord in the beauty of the inward holiness, as the outward Israel was outwardly, to be, and to do, in that outward ministration of the shadows of the gospel state.

CONCERNING CHRIST;

Coming to the Father by him; receiving him; walking in him; not in the oldness of the Letter, but in the newness of the Spirit.

AND CONCERNING READING THE SCRIPTURES ARIGHT.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6.

MAN, in the corrupt, degenerate estate, is fallen from God, and hath lost his image (the holy, heavenly image of the Father of Spirits;) is driven out from his presence, dwells in the land of darkness and confusion, under the government of the prince of the power of the air, who rules in, and hath power over, all the children of disobedience.

Now this should be man's work; even to return to the Father; to come back out of the prodigal lost state, to the Father's house; where there is sufficiency and fulness of true bread and water of life to satisfy every hungry and thirsty soul.

The way whereby a man must come, the truth wherein he must be renewed, the life wherein a man must be quickened, is Christ, the Son of the living God; and he must know him as the Son of the living God, and feel him revealed in him, and received by him, and so walk in him the way, in him the truth, in him the life, if ever he come to the Father. He must not rest in the description of things; but feel and know, receive and walk in the

thing, which by the Spirit of the Lord hath been often formerly, and is still, described, in what words, and by what means, the Spirit pleaseth. But to receive all the descriptions of him that were formerly given forth, or all the descriptions that are now given forth, that will not do; but the soul that will live by him, must receive him, and feel the ingrafting into him the holy root, the living word of God's eternal power, and must feel this word ingrafted into his heart, so that there be a real becoming one in nature and spirit with him. And then he is truly in the vine, in the olive-tree, and partakes of the virtue and sap thereof; he abiding therein, and walking in the spirit, life, and power thereof.

Now here a man walks not, nor cannot walk, in the oldness of the letter; but in the newness of the Spirit only. Paul, notwithstanding all his knowledge of the scriptures, walked but in the oldness of the letter, before Christ was revealed in him. And those in the apostles' days, who had got the form of godliness, but turned from and denied the power, they walked but in the oldness of the letter. Yea, the church of Sardis (for the most part) and the church of Laodicea, who had received the right order and ordinances, and the true descriptions of things, and thought they were full and rich, and wanted nothing, they walked but according to the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness and power of the Spirit of life. But, alas! how far are many (who pretend to Christ in this day) from this state, who never came so far as to walk in the old-

ness of the letter, from a true understanding thereof; but have only learned and continued to walk in the oldness of their own apprehensions and conceivings upon the letter.

Can these, in this state, possibly understand truth, or know the inward, spiritual, precious appearances thereof, either in their own hearts, or others? Surely no. Why so? Why this is the reason: because they measure the appearances of truth (either in themselves or others) by their own old apprehensions and conceivings upon scriptures concerning truth; which are not the proper measure of it. Now all such are yet in darkness, let them pretend what they will, and grow ever so high in knowledge, exercises, and experiences after this manner; and so the best, most zealous, and most knowing of them in this state, are but blind leaders of the blind, and (thus going on) shall most certainly fall into the ditch of perdition. Oh! that men could feel that which makes rightly sensible, and might lay it to heart! For no man can confess Christ (how then can he receive him, and walk in him?) but by the Holy Spirit.

And he that knoweth not the Spirit rightly, knoweth not Christ rightly; and he that doth not know him rightly, doth not confess him rightly; and none can know him rightly, but by the revelation of the Father inwardly. The mystery must be opened within, or there is no true knowing. The mystery of deceit is discovered within, and the mystery of life is discovered within also. And though the heart of man (in the unregenerate state) is

deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and no man of himself can search or know it; yet this is not the estate of the true Israelites whom God hath cleansed, and taught to deny themselves daily; but they have boldness before that God who hath searched them, and removed from them the iniquities which he found therein. Yea, whoever witnesseth Christ revealed within, shall find him revealed within for this very end, to destroy the works of the devil there; and he is a powerful Saviour of the soul from sin, and a powerful destroyer of the works of the devil within.

Now concerning reading the scriptures, mind this: It is said of the Jews, that when they read Moses (or in reading the Old Testament) the veil was upon their heart; which veil is done away in Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. Oh! consider seriously, is the veil done away from thee? Dost thou read the scriptures with the unveiled eye? Dost thou read in the anointing, in Christ's Spirit, in the pure heavenly wisdom of the divine birth? It was promised of old, that God would take away the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations. Dost thou witness the promise fulfilled to thee? Dost thou know the difference between reading the scriptures with the veil on thee, and with the veil off? Are the scriptures opened and unlocked to thee by the key of David, so that thou readest and understandest them in the light and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit; or is thy own understanding and will at work

of itself, in searching into the scriptures? If the wrong birth, the wrong wisdom, the wrong understanding, be at work, it can gather but that which will feed and strengthen itself; and if thou beest not in Christ, and dost not read in Christ, the veil is not taken away from thee (for the veil is only done away in him;) but thou readest and walkest in the oldness of thy apprehensions upon the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit; and so knowest neither the scriptures, nor the power of God, whatever thou professest to men, or dreamest concerning thyself. For it is no other indeed; thy knowledge, thy apprehensions, thy faith, thy hope, thy peace, thy joy (being out of the compass of the pure living truth, in which the substance, the virtue, the kernel of all is comprised and comprehended for ever) are but as so many dreams.

[Now for the objection, that if men should be left to their own spirits, and should follow the guidance of their own spirits, it would produce confusion and uncertainty: I do acknowledge it; it would do so. But here is no leaving of a man to his own spirit spoken of or intended, but the directing and guiding of a man to the Word and Spirit of life; to know and hear the voice of Christ, which gathers and translates man out of his own spirit into his Spirit: and here is no confusion or uncertainty; but order, certainty, and stability.

The light of God's Spirit is a certain and infallible rule, and the eye that sees that, is a certain eye; whereas man's understanding of

the scriptures is uncertain and fallible; he having not the true ear, receiveth such a literal uncertain knowledge of things into his uncertain understanding, as deceives his soul. And here man, in the midst of his wisdom and knowledge of the scriptures, is lost in his own erring and uncertain mind, and his soul deceived, for want of a true root and foundation of certainty in himself. But he that is come to the true Shepherd, and knows his voice, he cannot be deceived. Yea, he can read the scriptures safely, and taste the true sweetness of the words that came from the life; but man who is out of the life, feeds on the husks, and can receive no more.]

Oh! that men that are any whit tender, and have any sincere desires in them towards the Lord, could read that one scripture (Ps. xliii. 3, 4.) sensibly and experimentally: "Oh! send out thy light and thy truth! let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." (What did not David know how to go to the hill and tabernacles of God, without a particular sending forth of light and truth from God to lead him thither?) Then may men go to the altar of God, unto God their exceeding joy, and witness his hill and house their dwelling-place, when God, by his light and truth, sent forth from him into them, leads them thither.

The scriptures are words, whose chief end, drift, and service is, to bring men to the Word from which the scriptures came. And when men are there, then they are in the life of the scriptures, and witness the fulfilling of the

scriptures, even the executing the righteous judgments of God upon that spirit, mind, and nature in them, which is contrary to his image; and the fulfilling of the promises and sure mercies, which belong to Christ the seed, and to them who are gathered into, and abide in, Christ the seed. Here is the covenant, the new covenant. That which is said, or those things which are said, concerning the covenant in the scriptures, are but descriptions of the new covenant; but Christ within, the hope of glory, the Spirit within, the fear within, the power of life within, breaking down and reigning over the power of sin and death (so that the Lord is served in the dominion and power of his own life, in the righteousness and holiness before him, out of the fear of sin and death, all the days of our lives; so that captivity can lead captive, nor break the soul's peace no more; nay, not so much as make afraid those that keep their habitation on God's holy mountain;) here is the covenant indeed, the strength and virtue whereof is witnessed in the soul, as the soul feels the power of life revealed in it, and is made subject by the power of Christ, who reigns in righteousness, love, mercy, and peace, in the hearts of those whom he redeems out of the earthly nature and spirit, up to the mind and Spirit of his Father. And here the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the pure songs (the song of Moses, the song of the Lamb) are sung to the Father of spirits, to the Redeemer of Israel; which never were sung nor can be sung, in any part of Babylon.

A FEW WORDS [FURTHER] CONCERNING THE TRUE CHRIST; HOW IT MAY BE CERTAINLY AND INFALLIBLY KNOWN WHICH IS HE.

THIS question relates not to his outward appearance, in the days of his flesh; but to his inward and spiritual appearance, how it may be known. To which the answer on my heart is, Even after the same way, and by the same means is he to be known in his inward appearance, as he was known in his outward; which was by the revealing of the Father. For "none knows the Son but by the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals him." And when Simon Peter confessed him to be Christ, the Son of the living God, "Blessed (said he) art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Mat. xvi. 16, 17.

And if none could know Christ in his appearance in the flesh, notwithstanding so many manifest and express prophecies concerning him, but such only to whom the Father revealed him; how shall any know his inward and spiritual appearance, unless they be taught of the Father, and hear and learn of him so to do?

But more particularly to shew how the Father revealed his Son, and how they came to know in that day that he was the Son of the living God, the Holy One, the anointed Saviour; and that the same way, and by the same means, people that will truly know him, must come to the knowledge of him now;

First, They came to know him by the manifestation of the life that was in him, by the fulness of the grace and truth which dwelt in him, and put itself forth, so as to be discerned by the inward and spiritual eye in them. "For the life was manifested." 1 John i. 2. The life which was in him was manifested to the spiritual eye which was in them; and thus they came to know him.

Secondly, By his voice and knocks. Thus said he concerning his sheep in those days, "that they knew his voice." John x. 4, Oh! he hath such a voice, as none hath but he! He speaks in his Father's authority (not as the scribes, not as earthly-wise, learned men;) he speaks in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit. The words which he speaks are Spirit and life; they that hear his voice live; and when he stands at the door and knocks, he pierceth deep.

Oh! the beatings of his hand upon the tender and sensible hearts and consciences! Oh! his secret reproofs, his secret instructions, his secret quickenings and enlightenings! How did they, and how do they, eternally make him manifest in the hearts and consciences of his!

Thirdly, By his baptism, or by his baptizing into his own Spirit and power. While people were in expectation, and mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not I, who baptize with water; but he that baptizeth "with the Holy Ghost,

and with fire; whose fan is in his hand," &c. Luke iii. 15, 16, 17. Was not this *then*, and is not this *now*, the way to know the true Christ? He that knoweth him who inwardly and spiritually baptizeth, him who hath the fan, who inwardly fanneth and purgeth the floor, gathering in the wheat, and burning up the chaff, doth not he inwardly, truly, and spiritually know Christ? He that knoweth the word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; doth not he know "the word which was in the beginning, which was with God," yea, "which was God?" For he is the only searcher of the heart, and trier of the reins.

Fourthly, By his mighty works. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John v. 36. And when John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this question: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Christ bids them go and tell John what things they had seen and heard; "how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Luke vii. 22, 23. "Why herein is a marvellous thing," (said the blind man) "that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath

opened my eyes." John ix. 10. He who hath the power, and putteth forth the power inwardly; who openeth the inward eye, the inward ear, looseth the inward tongue, causeth the inward feet to walk in the way of life, and the inward hands to work the works of God; he is the Messiah, the Saviour, the Word of life, the Son of the living God. They that believe in him, in his Spirit, in his power, in his inward appearance, have the witness in themselves, the living testimony, which none can put out, or take away from them. He hath opened mine eyes, he hath opened my heart, he hath raised me out of the grave, he hath given me eternal life. He hath changed me inwardly, created me inwardly, by the working of his mighty power; and I daily live, and am preserved, and grow by the same power. I feel his life, his virtue, his power, his presence day by day. He is with me, he lives in me; and I live not of myself, but by feeling him to live in me, finding life spring up from him into me, and through me; and therein lies all my ability and strength for evermore.

OF THE THREEFOLD APPEARANCE OF CHRIST; TO WIT, UNDER THE LAW, IN A BODY OF FLESH, AND IN HIS SPIRIT AND POWER.

First, *Under the law.* Various were the appearances of Christ; sometimes as an angel, in the likeness of a man; so to Abraham, and so to Jacob, when Jacob wrestled with him, and prevailed, and had overcome; so to Joshua, or the captain of the Lord's host, at his besieging Jericho; so to Moses in the bush, he appeared as an angel, Acts vii. 35. so likewise in visions. Those glorious appearances of God to the prophets in visions, were the appearances of Christ; as particularly, that glorious appearance of God siting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple, and the Seraphims crying, "Holy! holy! holy is the Lord of hosts; his glory is the fulness of the whole earth!" Isa. vi. This was an appearance of Christ to Isaiah, as is manifest, John xii. 41. where the Evangelist (relating to that place) useth this expression: "These things, (said Isaiah) when he saw his glory, and spake of him." So he was the angel of God's presence, which went before the Jews, in all their journeyings and travels out of Egypt, through the sea, and in the wilderness, and in the time of the Judges; and wrought all their deliverances for them, as is signified, Isa. lxiii. 9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them," &c. So with the three children, he appeared in the midst of

the fiery furnace "in a form like the Son of God," as Nebuchadnezzar judged, Dan. iii. 25.

Now indeed the whole law was a shadow of him, who was to come to be the substance of it, and to perform that inwardly in the hearts of his, which the law figured forth, and represented outwardly. Thus Moses and all the prophets were forerunners of him, the great prophet of the spiritual Israel of God. All the priests, especially the high-priests, were types and forerunners of him, and to end in him, who is the high-priest over the household of God for ever. The judges and saviours were types of him, the great Saviour and Redeemer: for they saved not by their own strength, but by his Spirit and power coming upon them; so that the yoke (which was made and brought upon them by their rebellion against the Lord, and disobedience to his law) was still broken, because of the anointing.

David, Solomon, and the good kings, were types of him. David, of his conquest over his spiritual enemies; Solomon, of his ruling his Israel in peace, after he had conquered their enemies.

Circumcision was a type of his circumcising the heart, that his children (his holy seed) might love the Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

The passover, and blood of the lamb, was a type of his blood, and sprinkled upon the conscience, which preserveth against the stroke and power of the destroyer; and so God passeth over all such, when he visits for sin and transgression.

The outward sabbath was a type of the pure rest, which Christ gives to those that believe in his name: for indeed they that truly believe in him do enter into rest, and cease from their own labour and workings of themselves, and witness God's working in them, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The outward law, in the letter, written in tables of stone, was a shadow of the inward, living, pure, powerful, spiritual law of love and life, which God writes in the hearts of his children, which constrains them to obedience; and enables them to do all that God requires of them with ease and delight. For truly the yoke of his law is easy, and the burden of his commandments is light; so that they are not at all grievous to them that are under, and in subjection to, his Spirit.

When the mind is gathered, and brought from under the spirit and power of darkness into his Spirit and power, oh! how easy is it to believe, to love, to obey, &c.? Indeed there is nothing but love, and faith, and obedience, and life, and righteousness, and holiness, and pure power, and peace, and joy here. "For the old things are passed away, and all things are become new in Christ," to them that are in the new creation in him.

So Canaan, the Holy Land, represented the land of life, or country of life, into which God gathers, and in which he feeds and preserves all the living, whom he gathers out of the territories of death and darkness. And the plenty and fulness of the land of Canaan,

and the sweet rivers therein, signified the abundance of rich things, and the rivers of God's pleasure, whereof his redeemed-ones drink, as they come to live, and dwell, and walk, and sup in and with him.

Jerusalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jerusalem was built, signified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built; and the inhabitants of the outward Jerusalem signified the inhabiters of the new and inward Jerusalem; and the temple signified Christ's body, and the bodies of the saints, which are temples, which the Holy One dwells in the midst of. And that altar in the outward temple signified the altar in this inward temple, which all the true, inward, spiritual Jews have right to partake of, and none else. The fire in the outward temple, and the candlesticks, and the lights which were never to go out, signified the holy fire in the spiritual temple, which comes from heaven, wherewith all the spiritual sacrifices are to be offered up; and the candlestick is to hold the light (and the priests to keep the lamps burning) or God will remove it out of its place. So the holy garments of the priests signified the robes of righteousness, innocency, and purity, wherewith the people of God under the gospel (who are a royal priesthood to him) are to be clothed.

And the ark signified that which holds the law of the new covenant: and the pot of man-

na, with which kind of food God fed and nourished the soul in the wilderness, before he brought it into the Holy Land, must be for an everlasting memorial in the land of the living. For indeed Christ appeared to, and was with that people in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which signified the leadings of God's Spirit in the day of the gospel. Isa. iv. 5. And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their spirits were at any time opened) had a taste and sense of the true food, in and through the figure; yea, doubtless, at some times, they had all some sense, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat as we now eat of, "and did all drink of the same spiritual drink" as we now drink of, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all pass through the sea, but they were also all baptized in the cloud and in the sea, having a sense of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outstretched arm made bare for them; in which sense they sang his praise, though they soon afterwards forgot his works. Psal. cvi. 11, 12. So likewise there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark; which is the evidence of true priesthood and ministry for ever; and that which is so, is not to be spurned against, but still to be acknowledged and honoured, as of God.

In it also were the tables of the law, in the representative ark; in the true ark are the

tables of the law of life, which God writes by the finger of his Spirit, and appoints to be kept in the spiritual ark for ever.

Above the ark was the mercy-seat, with two cherubims of glory, one at each end of it, spreading their wings on high over the mercy-seat, between whom God dwelt or sat, where God met with and communed with Moses, and the priests under the law, when they came to worship him, and enquire of him; which figured out the true mercy-seat under the gospel, where the true priests (the true circumcision of the spiritual Israel of God) have access with boldness to the throne of grace, that (through the high-priest of their profession) they may obtain mercy and grace, to help in time of need.

So under the law, all the sacrifices (the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, the heave-offering, the wave-offering, the whole burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering, &c.) signified Christ, the one offering, who comprehends them all; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly offerings, which the spiritual people (the priests of the gospel) are daily to offer up to God: and the sweet spices, frankincense, and odours, signified the sweet seasonings of the gospel sacrifices with grace, with salt, with the Spirit, with the fresh breathings of life, with innocency, with meekness, with tenderness, with zeal, with faith, with love, &c. which yields a most pleasant scent in the nostrils of the Lord.

Now in the bullock and goat for the sin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the

holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the flesh, skin, and dung, carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh! how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with true understanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye of life, with the eye of the Spirit) into the invisible substance, this is sweet, precious, and heavenly indeed!

Secondly, *Concerning Christ's appearance in a body of flesh.* When the time of these shadows drew towards an end, and the fullness of time was come, he who thus appeared in several types and shadows among that people of the Jews under the law, he now came down from the Father, debased himself, and clothed himself like a man, partaking of flesh and blood; and was in all things made like unto us (excepting sin; for he was the Lamb without spot,) humbling himself to come under the law, and under the curse, that he might redeem those that are under the law (and under the curse) by fulfilling the righteousness thereof, and bringing them through into the righteousness everlasting.

Now while he was in the body, his glory did shine to the eye of the children of the true wisdom: his disciples (to whom not flesh and blood, nor the wisdom and knowledge which they could get from the letter, but his Father revealed him) they saw the hidden glory; they saw through the veil of his flesh, and beheld him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Now in this body he finished the work which his Father gave him to do; he fulfilled all righteousness (the righteousness of the letter, the righteousness of the Spirit) that he might bring *his* through the righteousness of the law or letter, into the righteousness of the Spirit and power, into the righteousness of the new life; and here that scripture is read and fulfilled, "*I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God.*" So his whole life was a doing the will of the Father, which sent him.

When he was but twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors and teachers of the law, hearing and asking them questions (discovering the pure wisdom of the Father which dwelt in him) because it was his Father's business which he was to be about, as he told his mother, Luke ii. 49. And when the Lord led him into the wilderness to be tried, he went and was tempted, that he might fight the battle against his great adversary. And when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, moving him to preach the gospel, he preached the gospel in the Spirit and power of the Father, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, as his Father's Spirit led and guided him: for he did nothing of himself, or in his own will, or for himself; but all in the will and time of the Father.

"*Mine hour is not yet come,*" said he to his mother, when she was hasty to have him do that miracle of turning water into wine. John ii. 4. And so when his brethren urged him to

go up to the feast, John vii. 3, 4. "My time, (said he) is not yet come; your time is always ready," ver. 5.

Thus he did always please his Father, and seek the honour of him that sent him; and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, being willing to drink of the cup which his Father gave him to drink; and so having finished his work, he returned from whence he came, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, being exalted above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

Thirdly, Now the third appearance of Christ, which these two outward appearances made way for, was his appearance *in Spirit*, even his pure, *inward*, *heavenly* appearance in the hearts of his children. This he bids his disciples wait for; telling them, "that he would not leave them comfortless, but would come again to them." They had had the appearance of the bridegroom in the flesh, and he was to go away. It could not be helped; it was necessary for them that he should go away; but (saith he) "I will come again." The same power and presence that is now with you in a body of flesh, shall visit you in Spirit, and so abide with you for ever. For he that is now with you shall be in you; till that time ye shall have sorrow, and be like a travailing woman; but the world, in the mean time, shall rejoice; "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you." And was it not so?

Did not Christ send the Spirit, the Comforter? Did he not come in the Spirit and power of the Most High, to be with them always to the *end of the world?* Did he not bid them "stay and wait at Jerusalem" for that appearance of him in his Spirit, and not go about his work and message till he came in the power and authority of his Father to go along with them? And did not their hearts rejoice when he came with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Had they not then the joy and peace which passed all the understanding of man; which *joy and peace none could take from them;* which joy they were not promised that they should receive till he came and saw them again? Yea, truly; in the kingdom, Spirit, and power of our Lord Jesus Christ there is a *seeing eye to eye.* Yea, it was so, in some measure, with some precious ones in the days of old, which that promise, Psal. xxxii. 8. "I will guide thee with mine eye," intimates; for the eye of the soul must be upon God's eye, and observe the motion thereof, if it be guided thereby.

And truly this administration of the Spirit and power of the gospel is exceedingly glorious, and they that come into it, come into the glory and heavenly dominion and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (and so are made kings by him, and wear crowns in his presence, though they still cast them at his feet) and are changed from glory to glory; and behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, which none can do but with the eye which is in some measure changed and glorified.

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AS IT WAS IN THE APOSTLES' DAYS, AND WAS TO BE AFTERWARDS.

1. WAS not the church exceeding beautiful, and in heavenly glory, in the days of the apostles? Did she only travail after life and glory? Did she not also bring forth? Did she not witness the kingdom come, the power come, the eternal life come? And did she not partake thereof, and dwell therein? Was she not a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars? Yea, did she not bring forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Who can read this state, who is not in some measure a partaker of the same glory?

2. Was not this heaven afterwards wrapped up, rolled up; and did not this glory pass away? Did not the great red dragon fight with the woman? And did she not fly into the wilderness, and was not the man-child caught up to God? And did not the remnant of her seed (who had the testimony of Jesus, and who kept his commandments) testify and prophesy in sackcloth? Read the xith and xiith chapters of the Revelations.

3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderness (when she was thus gone out of sight) did not the false church start up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wisdom? Did not she sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast

(wise and strong) having seven heads, and ten horns? Was she not arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do those things mean? What did the wisdom of God thus describe her for?

4. What did the true church carry into the wilderness with her, and what did she leave behind her? Did not the temple, the altar, and the true worshippers go along with her? Did not the Gentiles, such as were not true Jews, such as could not come into the temple (but only into the outward court, and worship there) did not these stay behind? And had not these Gentiles henceforth (from the true church's flight into the wilderness) the outward court given to them, that they might make use of it (and worship in it) as much as they would? The virtue, the life, the power, the Spirit being taken away, and removed with the true church, which fled into the wilderness, what did God regard the outward? "Leave it out of my measure, saith the Lord, and give it to the Gentiles." Rev. xi. 2.

5. What is the cup, the golden cup, which this false church hath in her hand, wherein are sorceries and witchcrafts, wherewith she bewitcheth people and maketh them drunk? Is it not a glorious appearance of things without the true life and power? Doctrines concerning God, doctrines concerning Christ, doctrines concerning worship, doctrines concerning sanctity, &c. Yea, but the Spirit, the

life, the power, that was in the apostles' days, is wanting. What remains of these is to be found with the true church in the wilderness (the blood of whose seed she drinks) not with her.

6. What will become of this great woman in the end; this rich, this glorious church? Shall she continue for ever? Shall she sit as a queen for ever, and never see sorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderness, to be restored to her beauty and glory again? Nay, nay; in one day shall her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine. It is true, she is wise and strong (and the beast also, on which she sits and rides, who is able to make war with? saith man's wisdom;) but wiser and stronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judgeth her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder against her, until he hath brought her down, and her flesh be utterly burnt with fire.

7. What shall become of those who drink of her cup, and who believe and worship as she teacheth? Shall they not all drink of the wine of the cup of the wrath of God Almighty, poured out without mixture? Shall they not partake of her dreadful plagues, in the hour of her judgment? Read Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. and chap. xviii. For these things are to come to pass as certainly as they were foretold; and when they do come to pass, blessed shall the saints be who have suffered with patience, keeping the commandments and the faith of Jesus; and woe will be to them who have persecuted them, and drunk their blood.—Read the xiiith, xivth, xviith, and xixth chap-

ters of the Revelations, which signify of, and testify to, these things.

Now whereas many say, that the book of the Revelations is such a mystical book, that it is not to be understood; to what end then was it written? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, chap. i. 1, and would Christ give them forth in such words as could not be understood? Again it is said, ver. 5, Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. How can any be blessed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without understanding the things contained in it? How can any follow the true church into the wilderness, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the false church, or refuse the mark of the beast (that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beast upon him, nor so much as the number of his name) unless he truly and rightly understand these warnings and descriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preserve in the way of truth, in the way of life (though through great sufferings and tribulations) out of the way of spiritual whoredom and death? For mystical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great ones (generally) commit fornication with. Rev. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3.— Indeed this book is a mystery to man's wisdom; for it was not given to the wisdom of this world, but is hid from that; but God gave

it Christ to give to his servants; and it is not a mystery (but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit) to the children of the true wisdom, who are instructed and taught of God to escape the bed of spiritual fornication, which the earthly wisdom (in the wisest men of this world) is entangled in.

[But God, in his tender mercies, determined to send an angel to preach his everlasting gospel again; and in due time so did, as is expressed, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. (Mark: none could preach the everlasting gospel after the apostacy, by any ordination or succession of ministry left amongst men; but there must be a new receiving of the gospel, by a new message and commission from on high.) And God likewise sent forth his Spirit of judgment and burning to consume the whore (the false church) which was grown very great, sitting over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; and to bring the true church out of the wilderness into enjoyment of her beauty and glory again. And when she comes again, she comes as a morning without clouds, without any veil, without any outward types or shadows of the glory to be revealed, even in the pure and heavenly glory itself.

He that hath a true eye, let him read this; and he that hath an heart opened by the Lord, let him acknowledge it: for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, and the knees of his redeemed ones bow to him, and acknowledge him the only Anointed One, the only Lord and King over all, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.]

CONCERNING THE TEMPLE AND SACRIFICES UNDER THE GOSPEL.

God's temple under the gospel is the light of his Son, the Spirit of his Son, and those souls which are renewed, and built up an habitation for him in the Spirit of his Son, and those bodies in which renewed minds and spirits dwell. God is light, and he dwelleth in light; God is Spirit, and his building is holy and spiritual; for he dwelleth in nothing that is dark, or corrupt, or unclean.

And that which is sacrificed or offered up to God must be clean and pure. No unclean thought, no unclean desire, nothing that is earthly, or fleshly, or selfish, must be offered up to God; but the pure breathings of his own Spirit; for whatsoever is of him, and comes from him, is accepted with him; but whatever man can invent, or form, or offer up of his own, or of himself (though it be ever so glorious and taking in man's eye,) yet it is but abomination in the sight of the Lord.

Thus all the sacrifices of the Gentiles (or heathenish nature) are rejected. Thus all the sacrifices of the Jews outward (or of the professing mind and nature, without the true life) are rejected also.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord" (said the prophet of the Lord of old) "and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased

with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Mic. vi. 6, 7.

What saith the answer of God? No, no; this is not the way to come to pardon of sin, or to acceptance with the Lord; but come to that which teacheth what is good, and what the "Lord requireth of thee, O man; which is to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with the Lord." Come thither in the teachings of God's Spirit, and worship there, and there thou shalt witness the forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with the Lord. Mic. vi. 7, 8. and Isai. i. 16, 17, 18. For it was not offering sacrifices of old (appointed under the law) that would do the thing, nor men's pleading the sacrifice under the gospel; but coming to that Spirit which teacheth holiness, and being subject to that Spirit, and offering in that Spirit (to the Father) what proceeds therefrom. So that his building in the Spirit is the only temple, and the sacrifices or offerings in the Spirit are the only offerings of the New Testament.

And here every groan or sigh towards the Lord after that which is pure, every supplication in the Spirit, every acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord in a true and pure sense, are of a sweet savour in the nostrils of the Lord: yea, using hospitality, relieving the poor, or doing any thing that is good from the good and holy root, are sacrifices acceptable to the Lord. Read these scriptures following, and if the Lord open thine eyes, thou

mayest thereby come to see both what the temple and sacrifices are.

1 Cor. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. vi. 16. Isai. x. 7. 15. Ephes. ii. 21, 22. Heb. iii. 6. Rev. xxi. 22. John iv. 23. Psal. xc. 1. These places foregoing are for the temple: then for the sacrifices, Psal. l. 14, 15. and li. 16, 17. and cxli. 2. Mal. i. 11. Heb. x. 8, 9. Rom. xii. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15. Phil. iv. 18.

A NECESSARY WARNING, CONCERNING ADDING TO, AND DIMINISHING FROM, THE SCRIPTURES.

[Extracted from a Piece addressed "to all that call themselves Christians," &c.]

It is recorded, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Great are the plagues that are written in this book, even *the pouring out of eternal wrath without mixture; torment day and night, in the presence of the Lamb*, &c. As the growth and fulness of the mystery of iniquity are spoken of in this book, so the measuring out of the fulness of wrath to it, is spoken of also. And great is the life and blessedness that is here promised, to those

that fight with, and overcome, the mystery of iniquity; and receive not any marks or names of the beast, nor are subject to any of his horns, though he push ever so hard with them. Now to meet with all the plagues here threatened, and to miss of all the blessedness here promised, is it not a sad state? Why, he that addeth to these things here spoken, or diminisheth from the words of this prophecy, the Lord hath said this shall befall him. Therefore, in the fear of that God who hath spoken this, and will make it good, let every one search, who is the adder, who is the diminisher?

Now mark, see if this be not a clear thing. He that giveth any other meaning of any scripture, than what is the true proper meaning thereof, he both addeth and diminisheth; he taketh away the true sense, he addeth a sense that is not true. The Spirit of the Lord is the true expositor of scriptures; he never addeth nor diminisheth: but man, being without that Spirit, doth but guess, doth but imagine, doth but study or invent a meaning, and so he is ever adding or diminishing.

——Did the Lord, in these words of forbidding to add or diminish upon so great a penalty, lay a restraint and limit upon his own Spirit, that it should no more hereafter speak in his sons and daughters; or did he intend to lay bounds upon the unruly spirit of man? Did God leave man's spirit at liberty to invent and form meanings of his words, and bind up his own Spirit from speaking

further words afterwards? When Moses said, Thou shalt not add or diminish, was this to be any stop to the prophets, in whom God should speak afterwards? Is not this one of the subtle serpent's inventions, to keep up the esteem of man's invented meanings as the true sense, and to make a fortification against the entrance of that Spirit, which can discover all his false interpretations of the true words of God, and to make him see that he is the adder and the diminisher, and that his name will not be found in the book of life, when the true light is held forth to read by.

——*But how may I avoid adding to the things, and diminishing from the words, of this prophecy, and of other scriptures; that I may not meet with the weight of this curse, or miss of the blessing?*

Ans. Dost thou ask this question from thy heart, in the simplicity, out of the fleshly wisdom? Then hearken with that ear, and thou shalt set thy seal to mine answer.

1. Wait for the key of knowledge, which is God's free gift. Do not go with a false key to the scriptures of Truth; for it will not open them. Man is too hasty to know the meaning of the scriptures, and to enter into the things of God, and so he climbs up over the door with his own understanding; but he has not patience to wait to know the door, and to receive the key which opens and shuts the door; and by this means he gathers death out of words which came from life. And this I dare positively affirm, that all that have

gone this way to work have but a dead knowledge; and it is death in them that feeds upon this knowledge, and the life is not raised. Consider now the weight of this counsel in the true balance: there is no opening of the scriptures but by the true key, nor is there any coming at the key till the Lord please to give it. What then is to be done, but only to wait (in the silence of that part which would be forward, and running before-hand) till the key be given, and to know how to receive it, as it is offered in the light; and not to wait in the will, or expect to receive it according to observations in the fleshly wisdom from the letter.

2. Let not thy understanding have the managing of this key, when it is given; but know the true opener, the skilful user of the key, the hand which can only turn the key aright; and let him have the managing both of his own key, and of thine understanding. Do not run in thine own understanding, or in thine own will, to search out the meaning of scripture; for then thou feedest with the scripture that which it is the intent of all words of life to destroy: but as thou waitedst for the key at first, so continually wait for the appearances and movings of the user of the key, and he will shut out thy understanding and will continually, which would still be running after the literal part of scriptures; and let thee into the life both of the prophecies and doctrines thereof. Man, when he hath received a true gift from God, he would be managing of it himself, and to be sure he will

manage it for himself (for the gratifying and pleasing of himself, and not for God;) and then God, being provoked, takes away the substance, and leaves him the shell. Therefore he that hath received a gift must be very watchful against that which would betray, or he may easily lose it: for though the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; yet if that lay hold of the gift which was not called, and to which it was not given, the Lord will thrust that by, and take away his gift from it.

3. Do not graft any of the fruit of the tree of life upon the tree of knowledge; for it will not grow there: an appearance, a likeness of the true fruit may grow there; but the true fruit itself will not. My meaning is, do not make a treasury of knowledge in the understanding-part, which is to perish; but know the true treasury of all the things of life, which is in the life itself; and in that understanding which is formed, kept, and lives in the life. Lay no manna by to feed upon in the old store-house (lest the fleshly part should be running thither, when its fleshly appetite is kindled after food;) but daily receive the continual bread from the hand of life. The wisdom of the life strikes at thy wisdom and understanding; and if ever thou wilt grow wise any more, thou losest this, and canst not possibly retain it: for that part is then getting up in thee, in which it cannot be held; but only a shadow, an image, a resemblance and likeness of it, which feeds and pleases that part which fain would have life,

but cannot know it; and therefore is necessitated to make images and likenesses of things in heaven, or things in earth, that it might have somewhat.

4. Take not up a rest in openings of things, though by the true key. Take heed of over-valuing that kind of knowledge: for that part which over-values that knowledge will presently be puffed up with it; but there is a more excellent and safer kind of knowledge to be pressed after, which is a knowledge of things by receiving of them. There is a knowledge of things by the Spirit's opening the words which speak of them, or by inward immediate prophecies from the word of life in the heart. This is an excellent knowledge, and not to be found in the earthly part of man: yet the earthly part (when this knowledge is given) is very apt to be swelled and exalted with it; but then there is also a knowledge, which ariseth from the gift of the thing itself. This knowledge is very precious, and much more full and certain than the other, having the nature and immediate power of life in itself, and so is perfectly able to preserve. As for instance, to make it more plain: there may be a knowledge of justification, by the Spirit's opening the words written in scripture concerning justification, and the blood of sprinkling; and this is a good knowledge, where there is a true opening of it from the Spirit; but then there is a knowledge by feeling of the blood of sprinkling in the heart, and by seeing with the new eye the way of its justification; and in this knowledge is the

power and the cleansing of the life received, which in the other was but spoken of. Therefore rest not in opening of prophecies, or true meanings of these things (though this kind of knowledge is very excellent, and hath been very rare,) but wait to feel the thing itself which the words speak of, and to be united by the living Spirit to that, and then thou hast a knowledge from the nature of the thing itself; and this is more deep and inward than all the knowledge that can be had from words concerning the thing.

5. When thou feelest things, then seek their preservation in the proper spring of their own life. Let the root bear thee, and all thy knowledge, with all that is freely given thee of God. When thou feelest thyself leavened with the life, and become a branch shot out of the life, then learn how to abide in the life, and to keep all that is given thee there; and have nothing which thou mayest call thine own any more; but to be lost in thyself, and found in him. Know the land of the living, wherein all the things of life live, and can live no where else.

Now in all this, in this whole course, from the very first step of it, there is certainty, there is stability, there is infallibility. From the very first opening of the true key, I begin to learn somewhat of God; and to learn certainly, and feel an assurance and establishment in it: and growing up here, I grow up in the true learning, and in the true settlement, and so I am not unlearned and unstable, wresting the scriptures to my own destruction: for I

take none of the knowledge of the scriptures from myself, from my own understanding, from my own study and invention, or from the studies of other expositors, but from a certain hand. And how can he wrest scripture, who is kept single, and has no desire to have any thing to be the meaning of it, but what is the meaning; and no will to know the meaning, further than the good will of him whose Spirit penned it thinks good to give forth the meaning to him; and who waits to receive this, not to feed the lustful knowing part in himself, but to feed the life with it? And when the life hath no use for it, he is content to have it shut up, and to be without it: I say, how is it possible for this man to wrest scriptures? But now a man that hath taken in a body of knowledge already, he goes to the scripture, and bends it, to make it speak answerable to that; and where it speaks contrary, he invents a way to make it comply, and so wrests scriptures forward and backward, to make them speak agreeable to what he has already received and believed. Thus every sort of persons, Papists and Protestants, bend the scriptures, to make them speak conformable to their opinions and practices; not having *the true learning*, which gives to read them in the true original, where the knowledge of what they speak and mean is certain: and so they are also *unstable*, and subject to be shaken by a wind of reason which is stronger than their own. And this wresting of scripture is *to their own destruction;* for that part which is

so much as desirous to bend a scripture, is to be destroyed; and that part cannot receive the true knowledge; but stumbles in its own wisdom and way of seeking, at the wisdom of God, and at the true way of finding.

——If ye could once be mild, gentle, and calm, and turn from your own wisdom and fleshly knowledge of things, it might please God to remove your stumbling-blocks, and to open that eye in you which can see the anti-christian nature, and discern between the coverings which it hath formed to hide its deceitful spirit under, and the true garment and clothing of life. But the seed of the kingdom is little, and ye are great; how can ye enter into it? The pearl lies hid in the field, and ye are gazing up to heaven; how can ye see it? Christ is descended into the lower parts of the earth, and ye are using means to ascend upwards in the wrong nature; how can ye meet with him? The gospel hath been hid; the sun hath not shined; it hath been night, and ye have got many false candles; which way can ye acknowledge the little glimmering of the day-star, who have such satisfaction in the warmth of your false fires? Ye are far from the true light, who have not yet received so much of it as to discover the darkness of the night. Ye are too high, too wise, too knowing for Christ, or for the sight and acknowledgment of the true means which lead to life. And if ye could once come to see this, there might be some hope; but in that wisdom wherein your life and knowledge

stand, ye are shut out; and ye are reasoning and stumbling at the stone; while others (who are broken in spirit, and in meekness and humility led to try) find it a sure foundation, even a foundation of eternal life, for the true seed of life; and are built into the living city, which is made without hands, and without any of the tools of man's wisdom.

EXTRACT

FROM QUERIES CONCERNING THE ORDER AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

IN *a case of doubt or difference, which shall be the judge; the measure of life within, or the testimony of others without? Shall I judge as I feel the thing in the measure of my own life? Or shall I submit to others against my own sense and judgment, because I have an esteem of them, as being much above me in the growth, sense, and understanding of truth?*

Ans. It is a great matter to judge aright, and to discern and know the measure of truth, the voice, motion, and judgment thereof, from all the enemy's false appearances, and from all the deceits of the heart. This is most certain; Jerusalem (the heavenly building, the church of the first-born) is at unity with itself. Truth is pure, eternal, unchangeable, always the same; the same in every member, in every vessel, throughout the whole body.

And this I may say concerning its appearance in this our age, Was ever the like unity known and brought forth since the days of the apostles? How hath the Spirit been One, the demonstration and testimony of truth One, the doctrine One, the conversation and practices One in us all! Why, or how so? Because we have had our begetting, birth, and teaching from the same life, the same Spirit; (the same fountain springing up, and opening in us all, that have been gathered into its nature and power.) Now from this fountain, from this spring of life, never issueth any thing that is contrary to the life in any. Therefore if there appear a contrariety, there must be a waiting to feel who is erred from, or at least not yet fully gathered into, the measure of life. And such as are of an inferior stature and growth in the body, are (in an especial manner) to watch and wait in sobriety and fear, till the Lord clear up, and make things manifest; and likewise in the mean time to take heed of an hasty concluding, according to what riseth up in the understanding or judgment, though with ever so great a seeming clearness and satisfaction, as if it must needs be of and from the life in the vessel.

It is not an easy matter, in all cases, clearly and understandingly to discern the voice of the Shepherd, the motions of God's Spirit, and certainly to distinguish the measure of life from all other voices, motions, and appearances whatsoever. Through much growth in the truth, through much waiting on the Lord, through much fear and trembling,—through

much sobriety and meekness, much exercise of the [spiritual] senses, this is at length given and obtained. And yet there is a preservation in the mean time to that which is lowly and submissive, looking up to the Lord continually, and not trusting to its own understanding, sense, and judgment. But that which is hasty and confident, and so ready to plead for its own sense and judgment, according to the measure of life, as it calls it; that is commonly out, entered into the erring spirit, pleading and contending for it knows not what, and is very apt to judge and condemn others in that very respect, wherein itself is most justly and righteously judged and condemned by the Lord, even by his pure life and Spirit in his people.

This then is in my heart to say in short to this objection: Let the measure of life judge freely in thee at any time concerning any thing, and that judgment will stand for ever. But be thou wary, wait on the Lord, that thou mayest be sure thou dost not mistake in thy own particular, calling that life which the Lord and his people know to be otherwise. For if so, thou departest from the unity and bond of the Spirit, and from the true sense and judgment, and givest deceit an advantage over thee, even to lay a foundation of destroying thee. Likewise those who are to watch over thee in the Lord (to lay his truth before thee, to exhort and reprove thee, as occasion is) that they may give an account of thy soul to him, cannot do it with joy and rejoicing in his presence, but with grief and lamentation

of heart; which is not at all profitable, but very unprofitable for thee.

Now for a close: there are some considerations springing up in my heart concerning unity, which I find drawings here to annex, in true love and tenderness, for the use and service of others; which are as follow:

1. Unity in the spiritual body, which is gathered into and knit together in the pure life, is a most natural and comely thing. Yea, it is exceedingly lovely to find all that are of the Lord of one heart, of one mind, of one judgment, in one way of practice and order in all things.

2. The Lord is to be waited upon for the bringing forth of this in the body; that as there is a foundation of it laid in all, (the life and spring being over all) so all may be brought by him into the true and full oneness.

3. The Lord is to be acknowledged and praised in the bringing of it forth, (so far as it is brought forth) and to be waited upon for the further perfecting of it.

4. A watch is to be kept, throughout the whole body, and in every heart, for the preserving of it, so far as it is brought forth, that the enemy, by no device or subtilty, cause disunion or difference in any respect, wherein there was once a true unity and oneness. For the enemy will watch to divide; and if he be not watched against, in that which is able to discover and keep him out, by some device or other he will take his advantage to make a rent, in those that are not watchful, from the pure truth and unity of life in the body. For

he that in the least thing rents from the body (in any respect or particular which was brought forth by the life) he in that respect hearkens to another spirit, even the dividing spirit, and by its instigation rents from the life itself, and so doth not keep his habitation, nor his unity, with that which abides in its habitation.

Now it is also in my heart (for the perfecting of this close) to mention a few things, in the same love and tenderness, which I have found helpful to me towards the preserving of me in unity with the body. Perhaps it may please the Lord to refresh some others by the mention of them, and to make them useful and helpful to them also.

1. The first is, *the pure fear of the Lord.* This poiseth and guardeth the mind, keeping down fleshly confidence and conceitedness, (which is very apt to spring up) making it wary and considerate either of what it receives or rejects; of what it practiseth, or forbeareth practising; causing it to wait much, try much, and consult much with the Lord, and with his ministers and people, and preserves out of that suddenness and inconsiderateness of spirit, at which the enemy often enters. For truth is weighty, and will bear trial; and the more it is tried in the balance, the more manifest its nature and ways appear; but the enemy's appearances and likenesses are not so; but their deceit, by a thorough trial, comes to be made manifest.

2. The second is, *humility of heart.* This is very precious, and of a preserving nature.

Yea, in this state the Lord helpeth and teacheth; and the soul also, in this state, is fit to receive the help and teachings of the Lord. That which is lifted up and conceited, (ready to justify its own way, and condemn even the whole body) is neither fit to be taught by the Lord, nor doth the Lord delight (but rather disdain) to teach it. And so not being taught by him, it must needs be liable to err; yea, to hearken to that spirit, whose voice is more pleasing and suitable to the erring mind than the Lord's voice is.

3. A third great help, which in the tender mercy of the Lord I have had experience of, is *sobriety of judgment*. Not to value or set up mine own judgment, or that which I account the judgment of life in me, above the judgment of others, or that which is indeed life in others. For the Lord hath appeared to others, as well as to me: yea, there are others who are in the growth of his truth, and in the purity and dominion of his life, far beyond me. Now for me to set up, or hold forth, a sense or judgment of a thing in opposition to them, this is out of the sobriety which is of the truth. Therefore, in such cases, I am to retire, and fear before the Lord, and wait upon him for a clear discerning and sense of his truth, in the unity and demonstration of his Spirit with others, who are of him, and see him. And this will prevent the rents which the want of this sobriety may occasion.

4. The last thing which I have now to mention is, *tenderness, meekness, coolness,*

and stillness of spirit. I wrap up these together, because they are much of a nature, and go much together. These are of an uniting, preserving nature. He that differs and divides from the body cannot be thus; and he that is thus, cannot rend or divide. This is the pure heavenly wisdom, which is peaceable and keepeth the peace; but the other wisdom is rough, stiff, hard, clamorous, ready to take offence, ready to give offence; exceeding deep in the justification of itself, exceeding deep in the condemnation of others; and dares, in this temper, appeal to the Lord, as if it were right in its ways, but wronged by others; as if it did abide in the measure of his truth and life, which others have departed from. And how can it be otherwise? How can the wrong eye, the wrong spirit, the wrong wisdom, but judge wrong, justifying the wrong practices, and condemning the right? But such shall find (if they come to the true touchstone, even the measure of life indeed) that they are not in the true tenderness, which proceeds from the life, in the true meekness and gentleness, in the true coolness and stillness; but rather in the reasonings, noises, clamours, and disturbances, which arise from another spirit, mind, and nature than that which is of the truth. And in coming back from this wisdom to the *pure wisdom*, from the pretended measure of life to the *true measure*, and becoming tender, meek, cool, and still in it, they shall there feel their error from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and therein own their condemnation therefor from

him; and also justify them who have abode in the power, and been guided by the Spirit and pure measure of life, which is from God, and in God, while they have departed from it. For though the spirit of error, wherewith they have been deceived and entangled, hath made them believe that they have faithfully abode in the principle and doctrine of truth, while others have departed; yet that will soon vanish, as truth comes again to be felt, and heard speak in them, and the measure of life to live again in them, and to redeem them afresh into its holy nature, and pure living sense. And blessed is he who is not deceived about truth; but is of the *pure nature*, and in the *pure power* of it; in whom the *true eye* sees, the *true ear* hears, the *true heart* understands; who is of a *right spirit*, and walketh *uprightly* before the Lord, and among his people. The blessing of the seed, the peace, comfort, and joy which is from the Most High, shall descend upon him, fill his vessel, and continue with him, to the satisfying of his heart, and the overflowing of his cup, in the midst of his brethren, and in the very sight of his enemies. *The Lord God, of his tender mercy, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, watch over, preserve, and mightily defend all his from all devouring spirits, and inward devices and deceits of the enemy; carrying on and perfecting the work of his goodness, love, and mercy in them, to his own glorious, eternal, everlasting praise.* Amen.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." MARK xvi. 16.

THIS is a very weighty scripture, and necessary for every Christian rightly to understand, that he may so believe, and be so baptized, as to witness salvation by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what believing is this which is here required as necessary to salvation, and which the promise of salvation is to? Is it any thing less than a *believing in the Lord Jesus Christ*, from a sense of the power which the Father hath given him to save with? Is it not an inward believing, a believing with the heart? And what baptism or washing is it which saves? Is it not an inward washing, a washing of the soul, a washing of the heart, a washing of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Doth outward washing save the soul? Inward washing doth; baptizing into the name doth. Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness (the inwardly renewing and washing of the mind) profiteth greatly.

There is one faith, one baptism. Is not the true faith inward and spiritual? Is not the one baptism so also? Sure I am, that he that thus believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, remaineth in the filthy, unwashed state, in which there

neither is, nor can be, salvation; but judgment and condemnation, death and destruction, for ever.

The apostle Peter shews, 1 Pet. iii. what the baptism is which saveth, even that which is the antitype, or which inwardly or spiritually answers to Noah's ark. The Greek word is Ἀντίτυπος which signifieth the *antitype*, or that which answers to the type; the substance, which comes instead of the figure or shadow; and so it is more properly and naturally rendered in the old translation thus: *The baptism that now is, answering that figure, saveth.* For as Noah's ark saved the bodies of those that were in it when God came to judge and destroy the old world; so the inward washing saveth those that are washed thereby from the wrath and destruction which will come upon all that are unwashed.

Now lest any should misunderstand and misapply his words, as if he spake concerning outward baptism, or washing, he explaineth himself in the following words: "Not (saith he) the putting away of the filth of the flesh," not the outward washing of the body, that is not it that saves; but that baptism which causeth the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this is the effect of the inward baptism; sin being washed away by the water of life, by the blood of the Lamb, that which is new, that which is renewed, riseth up out of the water which washeth away sin; and then the pure and good conscience answers to God, and the soul knows and partakes of both

the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and so being baptized by the one baptism, even the baptism of Christ, into the one body, comes into the state and fellowship of the living. Another apostle also speaketh of the inward washing, even the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; by which, saith he, "God according to his mercy saved us." Tit. iii. 5.

The apostle Paul speaks of a "circumcision made without hands," and tells wherein it consists; to wit, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: and sheweth how this is effected; namely, not by Moses' circumcision, but by the circumcision of Christ. Col. ii. 21. And truly they who are thus circumcised, are the true circumcision, the spiritual circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, but rejoice in Christ Jesus, who thus circumciseth them. Now in the next verse he speaketh of baptism, "of being buried with Christ in baptism, and of rising with him in the same, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead." What is this baptism? Is it inferior to the circumcision before spoken of? Is it not without hands also? What is it that buries into the death of Christ; that raiseth into the life of Christ through the faith of the operation of God? Is not this the one spiritual and heavenly baptism, wherewith the one body is baptized by the one Spirit? What doth outward circumcision avail? Doth it avail any thing? What doth outward washing avail? Doth it avail any more than outward

circumcision? But the inward circumcision of the Jew inward, and the inward washing of the soul from sin, doth avail very much.

Now for that place, Mat. xxviii. 19. where Christ expressly commandeth baptizing, it is a question very weighty, and worthy duly to be considered, what baptism he there commandeth. For if it be outward baptism, they greatly err who apprehend it to be the inward and spiritual baptism; but if it be the inward and spiritual baptism which Christ intended in those words, then they greatly err who apprehend it to be the outward. Now consider the words in the fear and weight of God's Spirit.

It is said, "Go teach, baptizing;" but it is not said, baptizing with water, but "in the name," or rather (as the Greek is) "*into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Now to baptize with water is one thing, and to baptize into the name is another; as they who experience the spiritual baptism know it to be. For the word of faith turns men from Satan to the power of life; and then as they receive the power, and are made partakers of the power, they are baptized into the power and virtue of life; and so they are buried (so far as they come into Christ) by the power of his Spirit, with this heavenly baptism, into death unto sin, and by the same power are made alive unto righteousness; and so the name of the Lord, the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, comes over them, and they rise up in it unto life and righteousness, and

so are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Now any outward circumcising or washing can be but a figure of this; but the inward circumcising and washing is the thing itself. For Christ sent not his able ministers of the New Testament to minister the letter, or to minister the figures of things; but to minister the Spirit (else how were they able ministers of the Spirit?) to minister the substance; not to minister a circumcision or baptism which might be shaken and pass away, as outward and elementary, but to minister the circumcision and baptism which cannot be shaken; which is the circumcision and baptism of the gospel, the circumcision and baptism of the Spirit, the circumcision and baptism of the kingdom, which is never to be shaken and pass away as elementary, but to stand and abide forever. Read Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28. and consider how all elementary and outward things which could be shaken, were to be shaken and pass away; that those things which were of an higher nature (even of the nature of the kingdom,) might remain and be established in their stead.

And indeed as the inward circumcision could not be thoroughly and alone established while the figure thereof remained, the same may be truly said concerning the inward baptism; so that by this it may appear, that the baptism of water cannot be the baptism which Christ intended in this place, because the baptism here spoken of was to continue to the end of the world; but the baptism of water is plainly of such an outward element-

ary nature, as might be shaken as well as circumcision, and so was to be shaken in due time, that that which could not be shaken might remain. Read also Rev. xi. 12. where it is plainly signified, under that phrase of the outward court being left out of God's measure, and given to the Gentiles, that things of such a nature were shaken; and so were those that were not the true and spiritual worshippers in God's sight. For they are Jews under the gospel who are Jews inwardly; and they who are not Jews inwardly, are by God's Spirit numbered amongst the Gentiles. And consider how not only the notorious Heathen, but such as had got "the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof," were rejected, with their outside shadows, as really as outward Jerusalem was rejected to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

Object. 1. *But against this it is objected, that the baptism of the Spirit cannot be the baptism spoken of in this place, because the baptism spoken of in this place is commanded; but the baptism of the Spirit was never commanded, nor was it any man's sin not to be so baptized.*

Ans. Surely this is a great mistake. Was the inward washing of the heart never commanded? "Rent your hearts, and not your garments." What is this but the spiritual baptism? The gospel is a ministration of inward things, and the inward things are strictly commanded there. Can any man be saved without inward baptizing? and is he not commanded to receive inward baptizing? and

doth he not sin, if he do not wait to receive it, and give up his heart and soul to be baptized by God's Holy Spirit? If the eye were opened in people to look into the gospel-ministration, and into the inward nature of things, this might easily be demonstrated to the least babe there. For as the gospel was before the law, and could not be disannulled by the law, so this ministration of the Spirit's baptism (for nature and kind) was long before John's baptism, and could not be disannulled by any outward ministration of baptism, but abideth the same for ever; and is to have its place in the gospel-state, where the figures and shadows of things pass away, and that which is true, lasting and substantial, filleth up the room thereof.

Now the baptism of the Spirit, or the spiritual washing and circumcising the heart (which is all one in substance,) was called for and required of the Jews under the law; and it was their sin not to answer God's call and requiring therein. Consider these scriptures following, with many more of the like nature: "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." Jer. iv. 3. Can the fallow ground be broken up, and the thorns rooted out (else the sowing will be amongst them,) without the circumcision or baptism of the Spirit, which is all one in nature or ground? Again: "Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x. 16. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!" Ezek. xviii. 31. (Is not this all one in sub-

stance with that scripture, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved?") "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved! How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee!" Jer. iv. 14. "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isai. i. 16. to 21.

Is not here the true baptism, and the remission of sins, which ensueth thereupon, with the blessing on the baptized estate, and the curse on the unbaptized, which extendeth both to Jew and Gentile? for with God *there is no respect of persons.*

Oh! that men could read the scriptures of truth, with the true spirit and with the true understanding! For these things which were written to the people of the Jews, were written for our learning; and precious things may be learned from the scriptures, by those whose eyes are opened by the Lord, and who keep close in their reading to that which anointeth and openeth the eye; whereas others cannot but misunderstand and wrest them, to their own great danger at least, if not to the ruin and destruction of their souls.

I shall here mention but one place more, which is that of Psal. li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Can any offer up the sacrifice to God, but he who is inwardly and spiritually washed from that which defileth and hardeneth? And doth not God require this baptism? And what is this but the baptism of the Spirit? who thus washeth the soul with his heavenly water, in the ministration of his word and power, when the virtue and efficacy thereof reacheth the heart, in and through the faith.

Object. 2. *The baptism of the Spirit cannot be here intended, because this baptism is to be administered by men; but the baptism of the Spirit was never administered by men; Jesus Christ was the alone minister of this baptism.*

Ans. The apostle saith, "that God had made them able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Mark; They were made able ministers by God, of that which giveth life; and that they did minister the Spirit by imposition of hands, is manifest, Acts xix. 6. and in many other scriptures.

Indeed the apostles were not able of themselves, or by any virtue or strength of their own, to beget men to God, or to baptize men into his name and power; but their sufficiency was of God.

Again, Paul was sent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes. Acts xxvi. 18. Now, open-

ing the eyes of the blind is as peculiar to Christ, as baptizing with the Spirit can be.

When Christ gave his apostles commission to teach, baptizing, he told them, "All power in heaven and earth was given him;" and bid them not "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father: for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" and that then they should receive power.—What to do? To baptize with water? or to baptize into the name with the same baptism wherewith they themselves were baptized? See Matt. xxviii. and Acts i.

Now if this commission (here given to the apostles, Matt. xxviii. 16. &c.) was to baptize with water, then Paul was inferior to the other apostles: for he, though he had seen the Lord, and was sent from him to open the eyes of the Gentiles; yet he was not sent to baptize with water, as he expressly saith: "He was not sent to baptize" (that is outwardly with water) "but to preach the gospel." But if the baptism intended by Christ was inward and spiritual, even into the name, virtue, life, and power of the Spirit, then Paul had the apostolic commission as fully as any of the rest, and the grace and power of God did work as mightily in him to this end, as in any of them.

But men are as much mistaken about the teaching required by this commission, as about this baptism: for this teaching is not a literal teaching of things, or a discipline into an outward knowledge and way, but a teaching in

the Spirit and power; and him whom God enableth so to do, he also enableth to baptize into the same Spirit and power. Yea, indeed, when the life and power ministers (the word spoken being mixed with faith in them that hear,) it brings the earthly part under, and brings the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ over the heart and spirit. And this is the true baptism, and the substance of the figure or shadow, which was before the figure either of baptism or circumcision was, and remains when they are gone.

Object. 3. *This baptism in the commission was to all nations; but the baptism of the Spirit fell only on some few at the beginning.*

Ans. The promise of receiving the Spirit is upon believing, and it extendeth to every one that believeth. "He that believeth on me," as the scripture hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that belive on him should receive. John vii. 38, 39.

Answerably Peter said to that great assembly to which he preached, whereof there were added about three thousand souls, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 38, 39.

Indeed several gifts of the Spirit were given (some to one, some to another, according to the pleasure of the giver) and diversi-

ties of manifestations and operations of the same inward life and power: but every one received so much of the Spirit as to make him a son, and to cry *Abba, Father*, and to wash him.

And this is the one washing which all the flock are washed with, and so baptized into the one pure, living body: and this is the substance of the figure, which substance belongs to the gospel-state; though God also saw an use of some figures in that day, and so inclined their hearts then to make use of them, which his gathered sons and daughters (by the gospel-spirit and power in this day) would make use of also, if the Lord did so require them. For the Lord is our judge, and the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver; who by his Spirit and power determines in every age what he would have his people do; and who leads into the way of life, truth and holiness, which always was and is but one and the same for ever.

And what if the Lord, who hath caused his everlasting day to dawn again, and the everlasting gospel to be preached again, will have every shadow and figure to fly away (seeing they are but one elementary nature and use, and not everlasting and abiding;) who may gainsay him herein, and say, that this is not the ministration of the everlasting substance, or the same gospel the apostles preached, because some shadows which they expect, and have a strong belief concerning, are not found herein?

Object. 4. ***The baptism in this commission cannot be the baptism of the Spirit, because it is to be administered in the name of the Spirit.***

Ans. The Greek word is not ἐν, which signifieth *in;* but εἰς, which signifies *into:* so that the baptism here commanded is to baptize into the name, into the Father's name, into the Son's name, into the Spirit's name, by turning them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; and then the power and life of God's holy Spirit comes over their hearts and minds, and breaketh the power of Satan, and washeth their consciences from that which is dead, and plungeth or dippeth them into that which is living.

Now as God made them able ministers of the New Testament (which is a spiritual ministry, an inward ministry,) and gave them the heavenly treasure of life and of his Spirit to minister with; so he required and expected of them the work of the spiritual ministry, which was the spiritual teaching and spiritual baptizing into the inward name.

But that there was also a baptizing with outward water, that I do not deny; and that it was of use, as a type, to the weak and ceremonious state the Jews were in (when Christ sent forth his apostles to gather them out of the law-state into the gospel-state) I am also satisfied in: but it hath been since corrupted, and set up above its place——and every one should consider and wait on the Lord, to know what God requires and will accept of him. For the kingdom of God stands not

in meats or drinks, or any outward washings, nor comes in the way of man's observation, but in an heavenly seed, and in the Holy Spirit and power of life; which, happy are they who are made partakers of, baptized with, and led by. God will try every man's religion, work and practices, by the true reed or measuring line: blessed is he whose religion will bear that trial!

It is a great matter to know the gospel-state and ministration, the gospel-Spirit and power, the gospel-church and ordinances, the words of the holy prophets concerning the day of the gospel, the words of Christ concerning the kingdom and power of God, the words of the apostles concerning the mystery of faith, and the Word which was from the beginning.

These are weighty things, and of great concernment, about which men may easily miss and wrest the scriptures, unless they be enlightened by the Lord in the renewing of their minds, and their eye kept to the holy anointing, that they may not out-run (and so imagine and conceive of themselves according to their own ability of understanding,) but know and keep to the gift and inspiration of the Almighty, which giveth true understanding. For as no man knoweth the mind of a man, but man's own spirit within him; so the mind of God (in the words which his Spirit spake,) no man knoweth but his Spirit. And there is a key of knowledge to open the words of scripture by, which they cannot be opened without; I mean, such scriptures as relate to the mystery of life and salvation, which was

always hid from the wise and prudent in every age.

The Pharisees had got a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the law of God, and prophecies of things to come, from the words of Moses and the prophets; but they had not the key of knowledge; and "so they erred, not knowing the scriptures," (notwithstanding all their diligent reading and studying them,) nor the power of God.

Every one had need be wary lest he err after the same manner, and so set up his own apprehensions from the scriptures, instead of God's truth and the mind of his Holy Spirit; for then he cannot but also oppose that which is indeed his truth, and truly agreeable to the scriptures, though to man's mis-biassed judgment it may seem different or contrary.

The Lord beget in people's hearts true desires after himself, and guide them into the way wherein they may obtain all the desires of their souls, which he begets in them; and the Lord preserve all that fear him, from clashing against the present dispensation of his life and power in their day and generation! The Pharisees little thought they would have killed the prophets, had they lived in their days: nay, they greatly condemned their fathers for so doing; and yet they themselves crucified Christ. And many now little think they would have crucified Christ, had they lived in the days of his flesh; and yet they disdain, reproach, and persecute the appearance of the same Spirit, life and power, as it now appeareth in the saints, whom he hath

redeemed and dwelleth in, and in whom he manifesteth himself, preacheth and suffereth, whatever men think of them.

Oh! blessed are they that are not offended in Christ, in the present appearance of his life and power! For they are not offended at him who gives life in the Father's name to all that receive him and wait upon him, and worship in the quickenings and virtue of his Spirit.

BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM A PIECE ENTITLED, THE NEW COVENANT OF THE GOSPEL DISTINGUISHED FROM THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW.

That covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Horeb, when they came out of the land of Egypt, was not to be perpetual; but to make way for that covenant, priesthood, lawgiver, and law, which were to be perpetual. That law, so given forth, made nothing perfect; but was a continual hand-writing of ordinances against the Jews; and the very salvation of the Jews was by another covenant, and by the laws thereof, Deut. xxx. 11. by which covenant, and by which law, they might be made perfect, and come to the better hope. Which other covenant is the covenant of grace, or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or the word which is nigh in the mouth, and in the heart, and speaks life to them that can hear and believe the joyful sound of it.

Now that this former covenant was not to abide, but to give place to the other, see Heb. viii. which treateth of the new covenant: for God's speaking of a new covenant importeth that he himself hath made the first old, ver. 13. It had a long continuance among that people of the Jews; but now against the coming of Christ, who was to be Mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. even a new covenant, ver. 8. as it had been long decaying, and waxing old, so now it was ready to vanish away, as ver. 13.

And indeed it was necessary it should pass away; for it was not faultless. *How! not faultless? Was there any sin in the holy law and ministration of God by Moses? Can there any just blame be found in any thing that proceeded from the Lord?* Nay, surely the ministration of Moses was holy, and without blame; but it was weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and therefore God would lay that aside, so far as it was weak, and suited to the weakness of a fleshly people, and bring instead thereof a ministration of the law in the Spirit, which should be lively and powerful, and effectual in the spirits of his people.

That which God aimed at in a covenant, was to keep him and his people together. Now this covenant was weak on the people's part; they continued not in it, and so, according to that covenant, God disregarded them, Heb. viii. 9. Now God finding this covenant not able to effect his purpose of love towards his people, he finds fault with it, bringing forth another or second, which this gives place to,

ver. 7.. And this other covenant, or new covenant, is not according to that. *How not according to that?* Why thus: it was not written outwardly, as that was. "Not according to that which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt," ver. 9. "For I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts," ver. 10. And here they shall learn the knowledge of God, every one from the least to the greatest, ver. 11. "So that all the children of this covenant shall be taught of the Lord," and learn the law from his mouth; not as it was given at Mount Sinai, (which ministration was to the children of the old covenant) but as it goes forth out of Sion, and from the "Jerusalem which is above," which is the mother of all the children of the covenant, and nourisheth them, not with the law of Moses, but with the milk of her own breasts.

——Wherever this new covenant cometh, the other waxeth old, whether to a person or people. Wherever the law of the Spirit of life is made manifest, the law of the letter is swallowed up in it, and is known no more but as it is comprehended, and is brought forth in it. And he that is in the Spirit, and hath received the law of life from the Spirit, knoweth not Christ after the flesh; how much less Moses? But taking the whole ministration of Moses in the Spirit, not only the ten commandments, but all the sacrifices, and other types also, here they are owned and receiv-

ed, even in Christ the substance: but the ten commandments, so far as they were a shadow, pass away before the Son of righteousness, as well as the other types and shadows of the law.

——Moses' whole ministration (as it stood in the letter without) was but a shadow of the fulness and perfection of that ministry of the Spirit which was to come, and to be set up by the Son in his house. Heb. iii. 5, 6. Moses' people but a shadow of the spiritual people; Moses' priests and sacrifices but a shadow of the spiritual priests and sacrifices; Moses' law in the letter ministered from Mount Sinai, but a shadow of Christ's law in the Spirit to be ministered from Mount Sion, 2 Cor. iii. 10, 11. The law itself which was given by him, but a shadow of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, John i. 17. Of whose fulness every believer receives a portion of the same grace, "even grace for grace," ver. 16; which grace is to be his teacher, both of what he should deny and turn from, and how he should live and carry himself both towards God and man. Tit. ii. 11, 12. Look particularly on the commandments, and see if there will not appear something of a shadow in them.

The first commandment to that people, "That they should have none other gods (like the heathen) but him only whose powerful arm had brought them out of Egypt."—This is a shadow of the subjection of the spiritual Israel singly in Spirit to the Lord of

spirits, who by his mighty arm redeemed them out of spiritual Egypt. Now must they bow to other lords no more, Isai. xxvi. 13. as they did bow in the land of Egypt (oh! who can read this!) but bow alone at the name of Jesus, and be subject to the arm of his power in their spirits alone for ever.

The second commandment, "That they should not make any images or likenesses of things in heaven or earth, or bow down to them," is a shadow of what God requires of spiritual Israel in the inward, where all likenesses, inventions, imitations, resemblances of what they have seen in the Spirit above, or beneath in the earthly nature, they must not make themselves, nor bow to such as any others make.

And they must not "Take the name (of the Lord their Redeemer) in vain," pretending to the living power when it manifests not itself in them; pretending to meet in the living name, and to worship in the Spirit, when they are gone astray from it, and become strangers to it. What should I mention any more? It is easy to observe how the other commandments were shadows of the inward innocency and purity, which the believer receives inwardly into his heart from the powerful operation of the law of the Spirit of life in him.

Object. *But may any of these laws be broken? If they may not be broken, then they are perpetual.*

Ans. The reason why they may not be broken is not because that the dispensation

of them is still in force, but because the dispensation of the law of the Spirit comprehends all the righteousness of Moses' law: and the end of Christ's dissolving that covenant was not that any might have liberty to do any thing which is there manifested to be unrighteous; but that the righteousness of it might be fulfilled in them who receive his law in the Spirit, which never could be fulfilled by receiving of Moses' law in the letter. Rom. viii. 4. And mark this diligently, ye that have been exercised in the Spirit towards God: the law of sin is nearer to us than any law of the letter can come; the covenant of death and hell (with the laws thereof) are written within by the finger of Satan; and that which blots them out must be as near, even an inward covenant, an inward writing from the eternal Word in the heart, by the law of his eternal Spirit of life.

This then is my answer: Moses' law in substance remains, as it is taken in by Christ, and administered by him in Spirit; but not as it was given in the letter to the Jews: for so it was a shadow, making nothing perfect; but making way for the better hope, for the covenant established upon better promises, for the inward law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; which effects that in the spirits of his people, which Moses' law could by no means do.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT CONCERNING SILENT MEETINGS; THE NATURE, USE, INTENT, AND BENEFIT OF THEM.

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward observations. He cannot see either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby; but to the mind that is drawn inward the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another therein, is sweetly felt; and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord received by them, who singly herein wait upon him according to the leadings and requirings of his Holy Spirit. Now to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord please,

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him, and for his further appearings, in that measure of life which is already revealed. Now this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for. For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into the nothingness, into the silence of his spirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can

do, out of this measure of life, into which he is to travel, that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit, and power of the Lord.

Now in this measure of life which is of Christ, and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul, there is the power of life and death; power to kill to the flesh, and power to quicken to God; power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this God is to be waited upon and worshiped continually, both in private and in public, according as his Spirit draws and teaches.

For the Lord requireth of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons, and according to the drawings, of his Spirit: and they that are taught of him, dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but watch against the temptations and snares, which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship. They are to wait upon the Lord, to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life, and the breaking forth of his power amongst them. And in the breakings forth of that power they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, &c. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But if the Spirit do not require to

speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place (in his heavenly place I mean) feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom, into his spirit, what the Lord giveth. Now in this is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying; his soul who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the Spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then also there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; insomuch as the warmth of life in each vessel doth not only warm the particular, but they are like an heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigour of life flows into all. And if any be burthened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, overborne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, &c. the estate of such is felt in Spirit, and secret cries, or open (as the Lord pleaseth) ascend up to the Lord for them, and they many times find ease and relief, in a few words spoken, or without words, if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For absolutely silent meetings, wherein there is a resolution not to speak, we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel him in words, or in silence of spirit without words, as he pleaseth. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to by the Spirit of the Lord as to silent meetings, is that the flesh in every one be kept silent, and that there be no building up, but in the Spirit and power of the Lord.

Now there are several states of people: some feel little of the Lord's presence; but feel temptations and thoughts, with many wanderings and rovings of mind. These are not yet acquainted with the power, or at least know not its dominion, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. And this is a sore travailing and mournful state, and meetings to such as these, many times, may seem to themselves rather for the worse than for the better. Yet even these, turning, as much as may be, from such things, and cleaving (or at leàst in truth of heart desiring to cleave) to that which disliketh or witnesseth against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein; and continuing to wait in this trouble and distress (keeping close to meetings, in fear and subjection to the Lord who requireth it, though with little appearing benefit,) do reap an hidden benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wasteth and weareth out that in them, wherein the darkness hath its strength. Now to evidence that the Lord doth require these silent meetings, or meetings after this manner silent, it may thus appear.

God is to be worshipped in spirit, in his own power and life, and this is at his own disposal. His church is a gathering in the Spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the oracle of God, as the vessel out of which God speaks; as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound. Therefore there is to be a waiting in silence, till the Spirit of

the Lord move to speak, and also give words to speak. For a man is not to speak his own words, or in his own wisdom or time; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wisdom and time, which is when he moves and gives to speak. And seeing the Spirit inwardly nourisheth, when he giveth not to speak words, the inward sense and nourishment is to be waited for, and received as it was given when there are no words. Yea, the ministry of the Spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words, than when with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified by many witnesses. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, how and what things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in spirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water.

SOME FURTHER REMARKS CONCERNING THE TRUE CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

THERE is a great noise in the world about church and ministry. Many are affirming which is it, and many are doubtful and enquiring about it; and many are truly and groundedly satisfied, having received the knowledge of the thing from God, who is not deceived about it, nor deceiveth any, but giveth the true understanding of these and other

things, to them that wait upon him aright; to wit, in his fear, and in the silence of the fleshly wise part before him. Now I have a testimony to give concerning these things, which that ear which is of God can hear, and to that I desire to speak.

That is the church which is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is Christ's spouse, he the husband. The head is living, and so are all the members of the body. The head is anointed, and the oil wherewith the head is anointed, runs down from the head upon all the body; and that upon which the oil runs not, is none of the body. Now no outward thing can make one a member of this body; much less can any outward thing, way, profession or practice, make a church. The church under the law was made so by outward things, by an outward gathering, an outward circumcision, an outward law, an outward worship, &c. but the gospel is a state of substance, a state of the invisible things, of persons invisibly gathered by the Spirit into the life and power of God, inwardly circumcised, inwardly baptised with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, inwardly worshipping in Spirit and truth, bowing at every sound and name of the Lord Jesus: and what is of an outward state here, is brought forth and preserved by the power of the inward appearing, and dwelling in it. So that this is the church now: a people gathered by the life and Spirit of the Lord; a people gathered by the power from on high, abiding in the power, acting in the power, worshipping in the power, keeping in the holy order and government of life (both

inwardly in their own hearts, and outwardly in their assemblings and walkings) by the power. Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; and in this power he gathers, governs, and preserves his church, and ministereth from, and by, his Spirit and power in it.—Now find this power of the endless life, find a people any where gathered by this power, and in this power; there is the church, there is the living body, there is Christ the head, whose dominion and strength is over all, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail.

And so for the ministers of this church. The same thing that gives to know the church, gives to know the ministers thereof; for they also are of God, called by him, receiving power from him, and abiding and ministering in that power.

—— And indeed, unless the ministers of the gospel be in the Spirit, in the life, in the power, how can they minister to the nature, to the spirit, to the life in the body? yea, so much as to the least member in the body? They may minister outward knowledge to the man's wisdom, to the man's understanding; but that is not the food that is to be ministered to the church, nor is that part in man to be fed by the true minister. But they are to minister life (living food) from the living fountain, from the head, from the Spirit of Christ in them, to the particular members under their charge; and so are to be good stewards and shepherds to the flock, giving every one their proper portion in due season.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

Many deep considerations have been upon my heart concerning the state of Israel, both past, present, and to come; some of which I find drawings to communicate; together with some Questions and Answers concerning Unity.

The considerations concerning Israel are these which follow:

THE precious living state which my soul remembereth to have been about the beginning of the late troubles of this nation, when Israel was bent to seek after the Lord, and applied their hearts to wait upon him in fastings, and earnest supplications, wherein my heart hath often had the testimony that they were accepted of him, and had many times the seal of his presence and power among them: yea, my heart did truly unite with and enjoy the Lord in what was then given forth, and I can never be drawn to deny the truth and worth of that dispensation; though I know it was swallowed up by a greater desolation soon following after, and since by the breaking forth of a more lively dispensation.

2. The over-running of that state by the subtilty of the enemy, drawing the minds of the simple and upright-hearted from the living feeling, and from the inward power of religion, into the disputations and contentions about forms of worship and church-government, which drew out the reasoning part, and withdrew the spirit of the mind from feeding

on its proper nourishment; and so life decayed in the spirit, while wisdom, and knowledge, and subtilty increased in the understanding. And so the upright-hearted, missing of life where before they had found it, were scattered up and down to seek after it; and those who abode where they were, grew dry, barren, and contentious; losing the savour, sweetness, meekness, love, and indeed whatever was living and precious, and remained fixing their minds on that which the Lord had departed from. Oh! the darkness and misery of this state! Oh! the pain of the hearts where life was stirring, for want of the living God! Oh! the death and formality of those that were dead and formal! Surely, had not the Lord pitied his people in this state, and appeared to them in his life and power, (which this great desolation made way for) it had been determined concerning Israel for ever: for death had overgrown the generality, and life was even gasping and expiring in the single-hearted.

3. The precious breaking forth of the Lord (at this dismal time, in this hour of distress and desperate condition of Israel) in some hidden vessels, whom he had kept waiting upon him, and whom he had preserved fresh in the sense of him; to whom his appearance was very glorious, to whom he opened the state of the earth, and the state of his people, giving them the everlasting gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and promising them that his Spirit and power should go along with them, bidding them go forth to till

and dress the earth, and to gather his people into his fold. And who can utter what the glory of this light was, in its shining and breaking forth in their hearts! How welcome to their weary souls, how pleasant to the eye of their spirits, how demonstrative and satisfactory to their hearts! Oh! the joy of that day (surely it can never be forgotten by them) wherein they sensibly felt the pouring down of the Spirit of life upon them, and their hearts gathered into the bosom of eternal rest, and their souls and bodies sanctified, and set apart for the Lord, and his service.

4. The contemptible means God put into their hands to work this work by; which was not by preaching any new thing, but by directing to a principle which God had already hid in the earth of every man's heart, and which was to be known by its divine nature and light, turning against and reproving sin; testifying that this was the way the Lord of heaven and earth had chosen, to bring his sons and daughters into the power and glory of his life. Oh! what heart can receive this, what eye can see any beauty in this, but that which the Lord toucheth and openeth! I testify (in the sense of life) that the wisdom of man, yea, the wisdom of Israel corrupted, cannot but despise and turn from this. Is not this the lowest of all dispensations? Is not this common to all mankind? Doth not this fall short (in itself, as I may say, and as it hath formerly been dispensed) of the dispensation of the law of Moses to the Jews, much more of the dispensation by Christ and his apostles?

Who would have looked for the Lord here! And yet this hath the Lord chosen to gather his people by, and to appear to the world in; and hath gathered the life, virtue, and substance of all former dispensations into it, as those who are gathered thereby, and have waited upon him therein, and felt the nature and power of his life, (and seen things past, present, and to come) are living witnesses of, against all the gainsayings, thoughts, and reasonings of flesh and blood.

5. The contemptibleness of the vessels, which the Lord chose to fill with this treasure, and to let forth this dispensation of his life through. They were for the most part mean, as to the outward; country youths of no deep understanding, or ready expression, but very fit to be despised every where by the wisdom of man, and only to be owned in the power of that life wherein they came forth. How ridiculous was their manner of coming forth and appearance to the eye of man! About what poor trivial circumstances, habits, gestures, and things, did they seem to lay great weight, and make great matters of moment! How far did they seem from being acquainted with the mysteries and depths of religion! But their chief preaching was *repentance, and about a light within, and of turning to that, and proclaiming the great and terrible day of the Lord to be at hand;*— wherein I confess my heart exceedingly despised them, and cannot wonder that any wise man, or sort of professors, did, or do yet, despise them. Yea, they themselves were very

sensible of their own weakness, and unfitness for that great work and service wherewith the Lord had honoured them, and of their inability to reason with man; and so (in the fear and in the watch of their spirits) kept close to their testimony, and to the movings of his power, not mattering to answer or satisfy the reasoning part of man, but singly minding the reaching to, and raising of, that to which their testimony was.

6. The blessing that God gave to this his dispensation of life in their hands. Oh! how did the Lord prosper them in gathering his scattered wandering sheep into his fold of rest! How did their words drop down like dew, and refresh the hungry thirsty souls! How did they reach to the life in those to whom they ministered, raising up that which lay dead in the grave, to give a living testimony to the living voice of God in them!—How did they batter the wisdom and reasonings of man, making the loftiness thereof stoop and bow to the weak and foolish babe of the begettings of life! Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the power of life hath wrought, through them, in the hearts and consciences of those, who have longed after, and waited for, the Lord. Oh! the breathings and meltings of soul, the sense of the living presence of God, the subjecting of the heart unto the Lord, the awakening of and giving strength unto his witness, the falling down and weakening of the powers of darkness, the clear shining of the light of life

in the heart, and the sweet running of the pure streams thereof into the enlivened souls, which hath often been known and sealed to from the powerful appearance of God in their ministry! Indeed when I have considered these and such like things in my heart, and narrowly marked them in my converse with them, I have been often forced to cry out concerning them, *Truly here is man very weak and contemptible; but God very glorious and powerful.* And indeed, when at any time I looked on the man, I was hardly able to forbear disdaining them; but, on the other hand, when the eye of my spirit beheld the power and glory of the Lord in them, I could hardly forbear over-esteeming and exalting them.

7. The glory which the Lord advanced these vessels to, since his beginning to make use of them. How hath he enriched them with gifts and abilities, and every way fitted them for the service and employment he hath had for them! How hath he enlarged their ministry, that they who had very little to say, either by way of declaration or disputation at first, now abound with strength, and abundantly surpass the knowledge and wisdom both of the world, and of other professors of religion! The Lord indeed hath adorned them, putting his beauty upon them, and causing them to grow up in his strength and in his wisdom. This mine eye hath seen, and often took notice of, blessing the name of the Lord, and praying to him for their preservation.—And surely whoever he be, that hath either known himself, or heard the relation of the

poverty of these young striplings, when they first came forth in the power of the Lord, how empty in themselves they then were, how sensibly they went up and down of their own weakness, how little they had to say to people that came to observe them and inquire of them, how afraid they were to be drawn from their watch, at what a distance they stood from entering into reasoning about things; I say, he that did know, and doth consider this, and shall also behold how the Lord hath advanced them since, making them mighty and honourable with his gifts and abilities, (with the beauty whereof the very man flourisheth to the sight of every eye that is in any measure truly open) cannot but acknowledge the change to be wonderful.

8. I have had the sense and consideration of this also in my heart, that their danger is now greater than when they were poorer, weaker, and not so enriched and gifted by the Lord. The enemy is very subtil and watchful, and there is danger to Israel all along, both in the poverty and in the riches; but the greater danger is in the riches: because then man is apt to forget God, and to lose somewhat of the sense of his dependence, (which keeps the soul low and safe in the life) and also to suffer somewhat of exaltation to creep upon him, which presently in a degree corrupts and betrays him. *The heart that is in any measure lifted up in itself, so far it is not upright in the Lord.* Let every one feel this, waiting to be preserved, and praying for those who are most beautified by gifts and

abilities from the life, because in this respect (and at this time) their danger is greatest. When Israel is poor, low, weak, trembling, seeing no loveliness nor worthiness in himself, but depending upon the mere mercy and tender bowels of the Lord in the free covenant of his love, &c. then is Israel safe. But when he hath a being given him in the life, and is richly adorned with the ornaments of life, and comes to have the power itself in his hand to make use of, then is he in more danger of being somewhat of himself, and of forgetting him that formed him, (being apt to make use of his gifts without such an immediate sense of the giver as he had in his trembling and weak estate) and so of departing out of that humble, tender, abased, contrite state, and temper of spirit, wherein he was still preserved.

——O dear friends! who know the preciousness of life, and desire the preservation of the Lord in your several conditions, let us fear the Lord, and his goodness to us, remembering what a low ebb we were at when the Lord visited us, and how freely he visited, and how freely he daily preserveth, that we may not be hardened or lifted up against the world, or against any sort of professors; but may magnify the grace which hath made and keepeth up the difference between us and them, praying to the Lord for them, and watching for the hour of his mercy to them, exercising all manner of sweetness, and meekness, and long-suffering towards them in the mean time;

also pitying and bearing with all the tempted ones among ourselves, as such who are sensible that we also may be tempted, and that understand the ground why we fall not by the temptation.

What shall I say more? There are three *Queries* appearing in my view, in relation to this thing, which the hearts of some may desire satisfaction about; to which I find somewhat, in way of answer, springing up in me.

Query 1. *How may a man, whom the Lord hath exalted by gifts and services to him, be preserved from falling?*

Ans. 1. There is that which waiteth to preserve, and is still stretching forth its hand, to keep to itself that which it hath gathered; which being hearkened and yielded unto in its discoveries and warnings, will not fail to deliver the soul from the danger and snares of every condition.

2. There is the free mercy and love of the covenant, wherein the soul may find help and pity, although it should be somewhat tainted and entangled with the snares of the enemy.

3. There is a proper frame or state of spirit; to wit, of humility and brokenness, which is fit for Israel in every condition; but more especially when he is exalted in the dominion and power of life, and honoured with great gifts and services for the Lord. In this Israel is safe: and happy is he who is not suffered to abide in any degree of exaltation of spirit; but is brought down again (through the tender mercy and love of the Lord) into this, though by the buffetings of Satan. [2 Cor. xii. 7.]

Query 2. *How may the little ones, if the Lord should suffer any (of such as have been very eminent in his service) to decline and fall, how may they be preserved from falling with him or them?*

Ans. Keeping to the measure of life in the particular, and not valuing others by an apprehension concerning them; but only knowing and honouring them as they are felt and discerned in the life: this will preserve every particular, that is thus ordered, from being tainted with any of their snares or deviations. *O Israel! O little babes! know no man after the flesh; but the Lord alone in his living Spirit.* For man is but a vessel, wherein the life may appear or disappear at pleasure; and the Lord is not engaged to make use of man in his service, further than he seeth good. The Lord may appear where he hath never appeared before, and he may not appear where he hath hitherto appeared very frequently and powerfully.* Oh! know the life in thine own heart, that is to be the judge in thee concerning the appearances of life in others. If that judge not, be still and silent in thy heart, waiting for its judgment: when that judgeth, let all thy thoughts and reasonings be bowed down under it. Let man have no more than his due, while the Lord pleaseth to make use of him; and to such there will accrue no great shaking or damage, when the Lord layeth aside any of his own instru-

*It is evident that the Author does not mean this in an arbitrary sense.

ments. But if any thing but the life judge, it will still either be setting up, or throwing down, man: whereby there will come loss on either hand in the issue, to all such who thus act.

Query 3. *How may any such, as have fallen from an high and glorious state in the power and dominion of life, be again recovered?*

Ans. Indeed this is a very difficult thing: not because the mercy and power of the Lord is at a loss to or concerning man in this state; but because this condition sets a man's spirit at so great a distance from the use of that remedy which the Lord hath appointed for man's recovery. It is very hard to bring such an one to a sense of his loss (whereby the depth of his fall might be prevented) until he be gone very far; and the farther he goes in his declining from the life, the harder will his recovery be. Again; it is hard for such an one to become so poor, and lie so low and so long at the foot of God's grace, as also to be contented to be so laid aside and not made use of, as the Spirit of the Lord may judge necessary for him, to bring him into a perfect abasement of spirit, and to work that perfectly out of him whereby the enemy now entered to betray him: yea, the judgment of the Lord (the righteous and severe judgment of the Lord) is hard to be borne in this state; and it is much if such a vessel do not break here, in its new forming on the wheel. Yet that which boweth before the Lord, being willing to be smitten and abased by him, and to lie under his correction and judgment his season,

even until he say it is enough, the Lord will without doubt restore into his favour, if not also into the honour of his service again.

Object. *But some tender heart may say (which feeleth many weaknesses, much unbelief, and the danger of falling daily,) If this be true, Oh! what will become of me! If such as these be liable to fall, and to fall so dangerously, how shall I stand! I was wounded enough before with the sense of my own condition; but this affrighteth me much more.*

Ans. O tender heart! the enemy may make use of this to trouble and afflict thee! but it was not so intended by the Lord, who is very full of unutterable bowels, and who hath a day of bowels for thy state; yea, his day, which hath already dawned, is so dawning as to reach thee. The Lord hath not yet done gathering his scattered sheep, nor yet shewn the utmost skill he hath, either to gather, or to preserve; and the state of the weakest, under the preserving power of the Lord, is safe. Great are the diseases of Israel; great is yet the loss of scattered souls, which as yet know not the call of the Shepherd; and if at any time they do feel a touch thereof, are easily reasoned again out of it, and driven back by the thoughts of their own hearts. Oh! great, great also is the skill of the Shepherd, and his hand very tender, which the Lord is putting forth for the help of these; blessed be his name. And as the condition of these needs and requires that from the nature and soul of the Lord, which the conditions of others do not require; so the nature of the Lord hath

mercy and love in it to answer their states, and will give it out in his day and season.—Oh! let none be offended thereat. Let no eye throughout all Israel be evil, because the Lord is exceeding good. If he please to kill the fatted calf, and set it before his prodigal son, let none that have walked faithfully with him in any dispensation be offended thereat: but rather let all, in whom is life, stand ready to shout at the issuings forth of love and mercy, in the varieties of the dispensations thereof, according to the need and capacity of every sort of vessels, prepared by the Lord to receive it. Therefore, *O thou afflicted! tossed with tempests, and not comforted,* thou shalt know and feel this from the Lord, that he knoweth how to bring home his consolations to thy soul, and to cast thee into the mould of his life, and bring thee forth in the power of his righteousness; and that he needeth not to find any worthiness or righteousness in thee; for he can create and make room for it in thy heart; yea, he can begin, carry on, and perfect his work in thee, for his own name's sake. And to thee, O broken soul! I cannot so much say, *do this, or believe this; but rather, the Lord will work in thee; yea, the Lord will quicken faith in thee, and raise up his own nature from the seed of his own life, which he himself hath sown in thy inward parts, and will not fail to preserve.*

Besides, this broken state of thine (wherein the vileness and weakness of self is daily felt, with the exceeding great need of the Lord's preserving power and mercy) is a safe

state; towards which, that which (alone) preserveth, is continually issuing forth in the bowels of his tenderness. And though thou dost not see the love of the Lord, and his tender care over thee (and so wantest the comfort of thine own condition); yet it is never a whit the less in the heart and Spirit of the Lord towards thee; and in divers respects I may say, it is better for thee at present to want the sight of it. I am satisfied in my heart concerning the nature and ways of the Lord, and I know there is that mercy in him which my soul crieth for; and that it is not only treasured up, but about to be issued forth towards those for whose sakes the cry is unto him for it. The Lord will arise, and have mercy upon Sion, even upon the mourners and distressed-ones in Sion; he will say to them who are of a fearful heart, and mourn bitterly because of their unbelief (finding themselves as unable to believe now for righteousness, as ever the Jews were to work for it;) be strong; stand still; wait on me your God; behold, my righteousness is ready to be revealed, and I am bringing that faith with me which ye want, to give your souls the entrance into my promises, and into my divine nature promised. Ye are my lambs, and my bosom is for you, and thither will I gather you; yea, ye have already conceived, and are with young, though ye know it not; and I will lead you on gently in a way that ye cannot, nor never shall, know, as ye would know it; but shall not want or miss of that knowledge thereof, that I see good for you.

I will beget a deeper life in you, and bring it forth after a deeper way of dispensation than ye have yet been acquainted with, or than your understandings can comprehend; but in the death which I am bringing upon you, and in the travailing pangs which ye shall feel in your hearts, shall it spring up in you and be brought forth. O dear lambs! mind the quickenings of life, and the savour and sense which the Lord begets in the heart, and let the outward knowledge (even of what ye have had experience) go, but as the Lord quickens it; and mind not the noises of thoughts and reasonings about things, which the soul's enemy will be striving to fill you with, and batter you by; but sink down from these, and wait to feel that which lies beneath them; in the free nature, life, virtue, power, and motions whereof alone is your soul's salvation; and if ye cannot receive the sense of this direction at present, wait on the Lord either for it, or for what other manifestation or tender help he shall please to give forth unto you.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL UNITY.

1. WHAT *is spiritual unity?*

Ans. The meeting of the same spiritual nature in divers, in one and the same spiritual centre or streams of life. When the spirits or souls of creatures are begotten by one power into one life, and meet in heart there; so far as they thus meet, there is true unity among them.

2. *Wherein doth this unity consist?*

Ans. In the life, in the nature, in the Spirit wherein they are all begotten, and of which they are formed, and where their meeting is. It consists not in any outward or inward thing of an inferior nature; but only keeps within the limits and bounds of the same nature.—The doing the same thing, the thinking the same thing, the speaking the same thing, this doth not unite here in this state, in this nature; but only the doing, or thinking, or speaking of it in the same life. Yea, though the doings, or thoughts, or words be divers; yet if they proceed from the same principle and nature, there is a true unity felt therein, where the life alone is judge.

3. *How is the unity preserved?*

Ans. Only by abiding in the life; only by keeping to the power, and in the principle, from whence the unity sprang, and in which it stands. Here is a knitting of natures, and a fellowship in the same spiritual centre.—Here the divers and different motions of sev-

eral members in the body (thus coming from the life and Spirit of the body) are known to, and owned by, the same life, where it is fresh and sensible. It is not keeping up an outward knowledge, or belief concerning things, that unites, nor keeping up an outward conformity in actions, &c. for these may be held and done by another part in man, and in another nature; but it is by keeping and acting in that which did at first unite. In this there is neither matter nor room for division; and he that is within these limits, cannot but be found in the oneness.

4. *How is the unity interrupted?*

Ans. By the interposition of any thing of a different nature or spirit from the life.—When any thing of the earthly or sensual part comes between the soul and the life, this interrupts the soul's unity with the life itself; and it also interrupts its unity with the life in others, and the unity of the life in others with it. Any thing of the man's spirit, of the man's wisdom, of the man's will, not bowed down and brought into subjection, and so not coming forth in and under the authority and guidance of life, in this is somewhat of the nature of division: yea, the very knowledge of truth, and holding of it forth by the man's wisdom, and in his will, out of the movings and power of the life, brings a damp upon the life, and interrupts the unity; for the life in others cannot unite with this in spirit, though it may own the words to be true.

5. *How may unity be recovered, if at any time decaying?*

Ans. In the Lord alone is the recovery of Israel, from any degree of loss in any kind, at any time; who alone can teach to retire into, and to be found in that wherein the unity is and stands, and into which division cannot enter. This is the way of restoring unity to Israel, upon the sense of any want thereof; even every one, through the Lord's help, retiring, in his own particular, and furthering the retirings of others to the principle of life, that every one there may feel the washing from what hath in any measure corrupted, and the new-begetting into the power of life. From this the true and lasting unity will spring amain, to the gladdening of all hearts that know the sweetness of it, and who cannot but naturally and most earnestly desire it. Oh! mark therefore! the way is not by striving to beget into one and the same apprehension concerning things, nor by endeavouring to bring into one and the same practices; but by alluring and drawing into that wherein the unity consists, and which brings it forth in the vessels, which are seasoned therewith and ordered thereby. And from this let all wait for the daily new and living knowledge, and for the ordering of their conversations and practices in that light, and drawings thereof, and in that simplicity and integrity of heart which the Spirit of life at present holdeth forth and worketh in them; and the life will be felt, and the name of the Lord praised in all the tents of Jacob, and through all the inhabitants of his Israel; and there will be but *one heart, and one soul, and*

one spirit, and one mind, and one way and power of life; and what is already wrought in every heart, the Lord will be anknowledged in, and his name praised; and the Lord's season contentedly waited for his filling up of what is wanting any where. *So the living God (the God of Israel, the God of everlasting tender bowels and compassions to Israel) fill the vessels of his heritage with his life, and cause the peace and love of his holy nature and Spirit to descend upon their dwellings, and to spring up powerfully in them towards his living truth, and towards one another.*

And let all strive to excel in tenderness, and in long-suffering, and to be kept out of hard and evil thoughts one of another, and from harsh interpretations concerning any thing relating to one another. Oh! this is unworthy to be found in an Israelite towards an Egyptian; but exceeding shameful and inexcusable to be found in one brother towards another. How many weaknesses doth the Lord pass by in us! How ready is he to interpret every thing well concerning his disciples, that may bear a good interpretation!— "The spirit," saith he, "is willing; but the flesh is weak." When they had been all scattered from him upon his death, he did not afterwards upbraid them; but sweetly gathered them again. O dear friends! have we received the same life of sweetness? Let us bring forth the same sweet fruits, being ready to excuse, and to receive what may tend towards the excuse of another in any doubtful case; and where there is any evil manifest,

wait, Oh! wait, to overcome it with good. Oh! let us not spend the strength of our spirits in crying out of one another because of evil; but watch and wait where the mercy and the healing virtue will please to arise. *O Lord, my God, when thou hast shewn the wants of Israel in any kind sufficiently (whether in the particular, or in the general) bring forth the supply thereof from thy fulness, so ordering it in thine eternal wisdom, that all may be ashamed and abased before thee, and thy name praised in and over all.*

[The spiritual eye beholdeth things aright, beholdeth things in the Lord, and tasteth sweetness therein, and is pleased with that which is spiritual. If every one did eye the Lord, subject to the Lord, answer the light and Spirit of the Lord in their own hearts, though the forms in the school of Christ be higher or lower, the lessons different, and the practices answerable, yet every one minding his own place and lesson, and performing his own peculiar service, the spiritual eye would be delighted therewith. And those that are of the true seed and birth do know, own, and love one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account; and do not quarrel with one another about their different performances. Oh! how sweetly is this practised and experienccd among us at this day!

And unity in the life is the ground of true brotherly love and fellowship. Not that another man walks just as I do; but though he be weaker or stronger, yet he walks by the same principle of light, and is felt in the same Spirit of life, which guideth both the weak and the strong, in their several ranks, order, proper way, and place of subjection, to that one Spirit of life and truth, which all are to be subject to.

Nay, he that is truly spiritual and strong in the light and Spirit of the Lord, cannot desire that the weak should walk just as he does; but only as they are strengthened, taught, and led thereunto, by the same Spirit that strengthened, taught, and led him.

——But if the Lord hath taught a man, opened the same eye in him that he opened in others, and brought him into unity and uniformity with the church, in the practices which the Lord hath taught it; and he afterwards let in another spirit, and fall from these practices, and judge the very church itself for continuing in them; may not the church testify to this person, that he is erred from his guide, hath lost the light in himself, and so judgeth amiss, both concerning himself, and concerning the church of God? This hath been the state of some who went out from among us formerly, and may also be the state of some who go out from us now. For as there is one that gathers to the true church; so there is another that endeavouts to draw and scatter from it, and then to cause men to turn head

against it, as if it were not of God, but apostatized from the Spirit and principle of truth, which indeed is their own state and condition in God's sight.]

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, CONDUCING TOWARDS THE FURTHER MANIFESTATION AND OPENING OF THE PATH OF REDEMPTION AND ETERNAL LIFE TO THE EYE OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL. [ABRIDGED.]

How *doth the Son of God, or Eternal Word, in whom is the light of life, redeem man out of the fallen estate, out of the kingdom of darkness and death, into the kingdom of everlasting righteousness and peace in the life?*

Ans. Three ways. First, by wounding him in the natural and corrupt estate, and so breaking his peace and pleasure in the kingdom of darkness, and making him weary thereof. Secondly, by weakening him under the teachings and chastisement of the law.—Thirdly, by healing and binding him up with the oil of salvation, in the power of the endless life, which is the gospel.

How doth God wound him in the natural and corrupt state?

Ans. By pursuing him with his light, which letteth him see what it is, discovering the evil and danger of it, and so weaning his heart from it, and making him look out after and long for a Redeemer. Oh! how burdensome is the captivity to the awakened soul, when

he hath a glimpse of what man was before his fall, (when he had a place and being in the life, with a spirit suitable to the life) and what he is now in his estate of estrangedness and alienation from the life; and whither he is going in his paths of unrighteousness, estrangedness, and alienation! And while his heart is thus returning from the land of death and captivity, and longing after the redeeming power and virtue of the life, the enemy (the power of darkness) lays loads upon him, drawing him more and more under the chains and bonds of iniquity, to the utmost of its strength. So that now lusts abound, evils increase, temptations and snares multiply; and in the land of captivity their strength is great, the soul weak and faint, and the redeeming power and virtue seems very far off. Now this is the estate of conversion; when the Lord, in the midst of the powers of death and darkness, turns the heart from them towards himself, causing it to wait (under the captivity) for the appearance of the arm of his strength, to break the yoke of the oppressor from off the necks of the oppressed, and so to bring out of the land of death and darkness, into the travels towards the land of promise; where the peace, the life, the liberty in the Lord, the rest, the joy, the full content and happiness is reaped by the soul, which follows the Lamb thither.

How doth God weaken the creature under the teachings and chastisements of the law?

Ans. By exercising him towards good and evil, and correcting him for his unbelief and

disobedience, as he finds good, just, and necessary for him.

How doth God exercise him towards good and evil, and correct him?

Ans. When he hath brought him from under the power of darkness in some measure; and in some measure set the spirit free therefrom, by the virtue of his life springing up in the heart, then he exerciseth the heart and conversation towards the good and from the evil; then he giveth out laws for or against things, according as he findeth most proper to the estate of every particular soul. Now upon the giving forth of the law, (the life being in some measure raised,) there is that which loves its teachings and pure path, and there is that also which draws back from it; and that being yet strong, there come many strokes and chastisements from the Lord, upon his own dear child. And these are bitter; and to be forced into the sin which it lothes, and in heart is turned from; and to be kept from the good which it longs after, and in heart is united to, (partly by the strength of the enemy, and partly by reason of its own weakness and negligence,) this is bitter also; insomuch as it crieth out day after day, and findeth this administration of the law almost as heavy a yoke as the land of captivity itself was, because of the weakness of it through the flesh, and the strength and advantages which the corruption of the heart and prince of darkness gather thereby.

What is the benefit of these exercises upon the soul?

Ans. They melt, they break, they make the heart tender and fit to be moulded by the eternal virtue and power, into a vessel for the power.

What frames of spirit do they work the heart or mind into?

Ans. Into very many precious ones. As for instance,

First, *They make the spirit poor.* The daily inroads of sin and corruption dashing against the holy and righteous law of life, the overbearing the strong desires after purity, and forcing into the defilement, hindering the soul from doing what it loves, and making it do what it hates and would not, this makes it become poorer and poorer, and more afflicted day by day. Upon some visitations of the pure life, and some fresh virtue received, oh! how strong doth the soul seem! but when it suddenly forfeits its mercies, loses its freshness, and is plunged deeper in the pit than before, how poor and weak doth it then feel itself, trembling at the next openings of the life, and springings up of the virtue thereof in it, not knowing what weakness, captivity, entanglements, and misery from the snares of death remain to follow!

Secondly, *They bring into a mourning estate.* They fill the eyes with tears, and the heart with sorrow; yea, they cause an entrance into *the house of mourning.* To be accustomed to wounds, bruises, snares, grieving of the Spirit, provoking of the deliverer, furthering and giving advantages to the enemy, &c. the sense of this overwhelms the

heart with grief, and causeth continual sorrow and lamentation to that which is upright towards God.

Thirdly, *They bring into a meek, merciful, tender-hearted frame towards others.* He that is tempted, he that often falls, and is so often wounded and made miserable, he pities those that err; he mourns over the miserable. His heart is broken with the sins and afflictions of others, and he knoweth not how to be hard towards them, feeling such continual need of abundant mercy himself. It is the rich man, the sound man in religion, that is rough and hard; but he that is once thoroughly melted in the furnace, and made up again, is made but tender, and retaineth the impression of the meekness, love, and mercy for ever. Now a broken estate in religion, or a state of waiting for the life, is much more precious than that which is rich and full by what it had formerly received, and still holdeth out of the immediate feeling and fresh virtue of the life.

Fourthly, *They bring into an hungry and thirsty state after holiness and righteousness.* Oh! how the soul that is sensible of its filth longeth to be washed! How it panteth after the pastures of life, the food of life, the living waters; to appear before, and enjoy God, in the land of the living! Oh! how doth the heart, that is daily afflicted with its unbelief and disobedience, long for the faith that stands in the power, and the obedience that flows from the power. "Oh! teach me thy statutes; shew me the pure path of obedience in

the way of life; guide my feet in the way everlasting! Oh! write thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee; create a clean heart in me, and put thy Spirit within me to be my strength. Oh! continue thy loving kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." Oh! what unutterable breathings daily issue out from the broken spirit, towards the spring of its life!

Fifthly, *They bring into a pure frame*, into a cleanness of inside. "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter," said Christ to the Pharisees; and he doth so in his disciples. "With the mind I serve the law of God," said Paul, when he cried out, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver?" It is not conceivable what purity of heart is formed by God in his Israel, by the fire which he kindleth in his Sion, and by the furnace which he setteth up in his Jerusalem; for though in the furnace the dross still appears, the sight whereof is apt to grieve and afflict the precious heart, yet the melting and purifying sweetly goes on, and the soul (which abideth the heat) is effectually cleansed thereby, as is very manifest afterwards, when righteousneas springs up, with the quiet fruit thereof; but this cannot be discerned, while the flames are discovering and taking hold of the unrighteousness.

Sixthly, *They bring into a patient frame*; fit to bear reproaches and persecutions from the world, who in the midst of all this weakness, misery and distress, lay loads upon the

poor soul, persecuting him whom God hath smitten, and speaking to the grief of him whom God hath wounded. God smites for want of obedience; for too much propensity to please the world; for not coming soon enough out of their customs, vanities, earthly ways and worships; and so soon as the heart and conversation is given up in obedience to the Lord, the world is discontent, and they smite and persecute because of the obedience. Now the more the spirit is broken by the hand of the Lord, and taught thereby to fear him; and the less strength it hath in itself, to grapple with the persecuting spirit of the world; the fitter it is to stand in God's counsel, to wait for his strength and preservation, which is able to bear up its head above all the rage and swelling of the waters of the worldly spirit in the men of this world.

Much more might be said, but this may suffice. What is behind will be felt inwardly, as the soul waits on God in the leadings of his Spirit, through the teachings, chastisements, and distresses of the law.

——*How doth God heal and bind up that which he hath wounded and broken to pieces with his various and frequent exercises?*

Ans. By opening the power of the endless life, in the vessel which he hath thoroughly purified and prepared, and filling it with the power. The free power of life, that is the gospel. To the meek, to the broken-hearted, to the cleansed it is prophesied; and when the work of cleansing is finished, the wound

made wide enough, and kept open long enough, and the death to the first husband fully accomplished, then the perfect oil is perfectly poured in, and everlasting health and salvation obtained. This is the end which God aims at in the visitations and leadings of his seed; happy are they that pass through the vale of misery, and drink off the dregs of the *cup of trembling*, not fainting nor sitting down by the way, but following the faithful Shepherd and Leader of Israel, till they arrive here.

What is the great danger in the path of life?

Ans. The great danger is of ascending a step higher than the present estate and condition will bear; for by this means the aspiring mind gets up, and is exalted, and holdeth somewhat received from the life, out of the pure fear which preserves the heart clean, and out of the sensible feeling which keepeth fresh and living to God. And then the simplicity is betrayed, and a wrong spirit lives, and a wrong eye is opened; so that there is nothing now but whoredom from the life, and the heart exalted and conceited in the way of its whoredom, as if it were the pure bed and most excellent way of enjoyment of the life.

What way is there of preservation herefrom?

Ans. Watching to the life, keeping low in the fear, and close to the feeling. Here the aspirer is shut out, or soon espied at his beginning to enter, and then the living cross received, which crucifieth and driveth him back. And indeed there is no way of safety in the travels towards the enjoyment of life,

or under any enjoyment before the state of perfect death, but under the cross to that spirit and nature which would dwell there, and please itself therewith, and be somewhat therein, and so forget the pure everlasting spring, adulterating with the streamings forth of it.

Man was made for God to be a vessel of his pleasure, to receive his content, enjoyment, and happiness by reflexion. So that man's proper work was to watch to the spring from whence he came; to be disposed of, ordered, and to be according to his pleasure. This was natural to man before his fall, till a corrupt spirit by deceit entered him, and corrupted him. And while any thing of that corrupt spirit or fallen nature remains, he is apt to aspire in the self-hood, and to seek the enjoyment of what comes from the fountain (yea, and the fountain itself also) in and according to the will and wisdom of the self-hood. And here let man receive what gifts soever from God, be advanced to ever so high an habitation in the land of life, yea, have the very fountain itself given him; yet by this means he will corrupt, lose the gift or spring, be separated from it, and adulterate with what he can still retain or gather in his own principle. And here do deep travellers lose their way, falling from their portion in the land of life, and from their enjoyments in the paradise of the pleasure of the life, into the earthly and sensual spirit, holding things wisely and richly there in the earthly principle, not knowing the remove of their habitation thither, nor thinking that they are there.

He that readeth these things, let him not strive to comprehend them; but be content with what he feeleth thereof suitable to his own present estate: and as the life grows in him, and he in the life, and he comes to meet with the things and exercises spoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themselves open to him, and be useful and serviceable to him so far as the Lord pleaseth, he keeping to the leading, savour and principle of life in himself, wherein alone his knowledge, sight, growth, and experiences are safe.

DETACHED PARAGRAPHS, FROM DIFFERENT PIECES.

There is a necessity both of the knowledge of persons to pass away, and also of their experiences to be given up, and let fall:—First, When the virtue is withdrawn from them, when death hath caught them, when they become death's goods: for that which is received from the life, is only profitable to the soul in the virtue of the life. When the earthly part hath caught them, and seated itself there, they then become the strong-holds of the enemy, and the engines of death to the heart; so that then life and true relief is not to be had in them, but where the eternal virtue pleases next to appear.——Secondly, When God hath somewhat to bring forth further in the world,

or in any particular heart, to make way for it he brings death upon that which was before living. Thus when God is pleased to *bring forth a greater measure of faith, and power of his Spirit*, he distresseth the heart, making the foregoing faith and power appear weak, and pass away; and many times for a season shutteth up the soul in the unbelief, until the fresh faith and fresh power spring up and arise. And this causeth the necessity of the further dispensations of his eternal virtue to appear, and the beauty of them to shine; which they would not have done so abundantly, had it not been for the foregoing distress of the heart.

A little thing will destroy the work of God in the heart. In the path of life, in the faith, in the obedience to God's Spirit, there alone is the preservation of the work of God; but in the unbelief, in the disobedience, in the doubting, (though about ever so small a matter) there is death and destruction met with, if the person venture upon that which he doubteth of. Those who have travelled in the path of life, I know can witness this. Oh! how small a thing brings a veil over the life! What a little giving way to the reasonings of the earthly spirit about a small matter drives back the work of God in the heart, and brings anguish and misery upon the soul, causing the hiding the light of God's countenance, which is the life and joy of the renewed spirit!—

God is a great King, and all his leadings and teachings are weighty; and he that rebelleth, or neglecteth in the least thing, must bear his burden, unless he feel the humiliation of his soul, and the remission from the Spirit of the Lord, the grace of God pitying him, and the blood of his Son washing him.

The enemy useth all his strength and subtilty to the utmost, to hold his captives in subjection to him, and under his power, as long as ever he can. He keeps every hold, he strengthens every reasoning, and every thought and imagination of the mind against God's call, against the appearances of his Spirit in the heart. *Do not go yet, (saith the enemy;) thy way is not yet plain before thee, thy light is not yet clear enough; the reason or consideration which is objected, is not yet fully answered. Thou art to try all things; but there is this, or that, or the other consideration, which thou hast not yet tried, or considered of fully, and satisfactorily to thy own heart.*— Thus many pure drawings of the Father, (in which there was light sufficient for the soul to follow) have been lost, and the soul thereby hath missed of the hand which was put forth (in the tender love of the Lord) to help and save it.

There is no man perisheth for want of power; for there is power in the free gift which comes upon all. There is power in it to quicken, to give faith, to preserve in the

faith, to do all that is to be done in the soul; and it doth all every where, as it findeth place and entertainment in the soul. But man refuseth, man loveth the darkness, hateth the light, shutteth his eyes against it, withdraweth his heart from it, and so beateth back the purpose and counsel of God's love and good will towards him.

——Had there not been somewhat near every man, which had more power in it than sin had, they might have had some plea before the Lord; but the presence of this, the power of this, the working of this in every heart, more or less, leaves all men without excuse, and clears the free giver and his free gift in the balance of righteousness. For this gift of his is faithful to every man upon the face of the earth, never consenting to his iniquities and transgressions in any kind, but still testifying against them as the Lord pleaseth to open its mouth. But who hath believed its report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Yet greater will the condemnation be upon them, upon whom the Lord hath more abundantly shined; and many will have a plea in respect of them, which the Lord will hear and consider, and so they shall not enter into that depth of judgment and condemnation, which will light on such as have resisted the light and power of life, in its more glorious and bright appearances and strivings with them; even as Christ said, "It shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem."

——As concerning election itself, observe this; that it is in Christ, and not out of him. For it was the intent of God to honour his Son, even as his Son honoured him: and this was the honour which God gave him, "That he should be his salvation to the ends of the earth; that whosoever believed on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." That he should be the way for all mankind to come to the Father, through faith in him; "that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive;" and as in Adam all men were shut up in death and condemnation, so the free gift might come upon all, and the way of life and redemption be opened to all, in him.

——"He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth?" But that he hardeneth any, without first giving them a day of mercy, and visitations of mercy, following them with mercy, and forbearing them in mercy, and so by the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, leading them to repentance, that they might escape his wrath, and the dread of his powerful vengeance, because of sin: I say, that God hardens any before he hath dealt thus with them, from a mere will in himself, because he would destroy the most and far greatest part of men; this the scriptures no where testify to, but abundantly testify against.

To know the Father (even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) as the fountain or original spring of light, life, love, wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, and all spiritual and heavenly blessings:

To know the Son as the way to the Father, as the way to life, peace, and blessedness in the Father:

To know the Son's Spirit, and the Father's also, whereby the Father draws to the Son, and the Son brings to the Father; whereby the Son quickens, begets, renews, sanctifies, destroys, cuts down, burns up that which is drossy, corrupt, and chaffy; yea, not only the fruits of sin, but the very root itself, yea the very earth in which the root grows, and the heavens that water the earth are consumed and pass away inwardly, and a new heaven and a new earth is inwardly planted and formed, wherein dwells righteousness; so that the cage of unclean birds, the place where the dragons lay, is shaken and removed, and the place of the wicked inwardly known no more; but instead thereof there are new heavens and earth, even of the new creation of God; which earth brings forth the increase of life, the fruits of life, the seeds and trees of righteousness, of God's sowing, planting, grafting, pruning, and causing to grow, that he may be glorified: I say,

Thus to know the Father, thus to know the Son, thus to know the Holy Spirit of light,

life, love, and righteousness, &c. not notionally in the brain, or with a comprehensive knowledge of the mind, but livingly in the heart, in the light that shines from the Father and Son, in the life that springs from them, in the love which is of them (for, indeed, it is love that gives the bright, purely sensible and uniting knowledge:) this is precious knowledge; and all knowledge of the very same things, any otherwise than as coming from, and held in, this springing life, is of no comparison with the excellency (for nature and virtue) of this kind of knowledge.

Now there have been two great dispensations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The one figurative, the other substantial. The one called the law, the other the gospel. For under the law the Father was made known, the Son made known, the Spirit made known; but all in figures and outward ways of manifestation. God was to that people of the Jews a fountain of living waters; and when they forsook him, and trusted in lying vanities, they forsook the fountain of their own mercies. They then forsook the fountain of living waters, digging to themselves broken cisterns that could hold no water.

So the Son was made known under the types and figures of the law, as the King of righteousness, as the high-priest of God, as the prophet that God would raise up, as the spiritual rock which yielded the spiritual waters, of which the soul was to drink. And they that were athirst were to come to him and buy wine and milk of him, and incline

their ear to him, that they might hear and live, and he would make an everlasting covenant with them, even the sure mercies of David.

So the Spirit of God, which was typified under a pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, did strive with man before the law, and was given to the Jews to instruct them, and to plough up their fallow ground, and circumcise them inwardly, and to wash their hearts from wickedness and vain thoughts, that they might not lodge in them.

But all this was not properly (in the Spirit and power of it) the dispensation of the law; but hid in a mystery, and running underground, as I may so say. This was from another covenant, and part of another covenant than the covenant of the law, though in the time of the law. For there was another covenant which Moses declared of, besides the covenant of the law made in Horeb, which was the word of life, or word of faith in the mouth and heart, which teacheth the substance of the law, and also gives power to fulfil the righteousness of the law, to them that hear and receive its voice, in the faith which it gives or begets. And so the Father of Spirits was known in the time of the law. Christ the redeemer was known to live, yea to live in the heart in the time of the law. The free Spirit, the Spirit of love was received, and the presence of God felt and enjoyed by God's Calebs, Joshuas, and Davids (by men after God's own heart) in the time of the law. Moses had his meekness and tenderness, and

was made faithful in all God's house by the Spirit of Christ, the meek lamb-like Spirit.

Now when the shadows came to an end, Christ the substance was to come. The everlasting King, the everlasting high-priest, the everlasting prophet was to appear. The everlasting rock and holy builder was to appear, and raise up David's tabernacle in Spirit, and minister in the true sanctuary, by his light, by his life, by his power, by his righteous Spirit. There is not another tabernacle to be built, not another temple, not another Jerusalem than the heavenly Jerusalem, not another Mount Sion to be known or come to, than the gospel Mount Sion; not another God, than God the judge of all in the gospel-state; not another word or law of life, than the law which goeth forth out of Sion, and the word that issueth out from this heavenly Jerusalem; not another water to wash the soul with, not another blood to sprinkle the conscience with, not another spirit to enlighten, quicken, keep alive, and comfort, than the Spirit of light, life, and love from God, which reconciles unto God, and brings into the gospel-righteousness, rest and peace, and establisheth the soul therein.

So now, feeling the Spirit of the Son, and being led by him to the Father, and the Father with the Son, by the Holy Spirit, creating me anew, enlightening me, quickening me, raising me in life, circumcising my heart to love, I am come to life, and at rest in him that lives in me, and works in me, and gives me to live, and work, and rest in him. For

there are the sabbath-day's works, even works of love, works of life, works of righteousness and holiness, works that the Lord works in the souls in whom he dwells and rests, and which they in the pure rest, peace, and joy of life, work in the Lord their God, who works all their works in them and for them.

Now in this gospel-dispensation, or in this dispensation of the Son in Spirit, all other dispensations are gathered and wrapped up, and thoroughly experienced by the soul that travels with and is led by Christ, in this his gospel-dispensation.

As first, There is Moses in Spirit known and travelled through. There is the ministration of the law in the Spirit inwardly commanding, known, heard, felt, received, before the gospel-power is given to perform. And here is hard travel and sore exercises. Here the Father is known commanding, and the soul consents and would fain obey, but finds the law in the members rebelling against the law which the mind hath a sense of, and desires after.

Then afterwards comes the dispensation of the prophets, wherein there are prophecies of a better state to come, openings of the mercy and love which is to be manifested in the latter days, at the end of these trials and exercises, wherein the soul hath promises from God, that the righteousness shall be revealed, that power to become a son shall be given, and the enemy's strength broken, and the bowed down soul raised up from under his oppression, and the Lord shall tread him un-

der the feet of the poor and needy, and the hungry and thirsty shall be filled with righteousness, and the meek come to inherit God's earth, and the beggar come from the dunghill, be raised up in the power of life, to sit among princes, even the princes in the heavenly glory of God's everlasting kingdom.

After this succeeds John's ministry in Spirit, even the levelling the mountains, the raising up the vallies, the preparing the way for the King of glory, that he may come in and reveal his glory inwardly. For not in the time of the law inwardly, nor in the time of the propheeies inwardly; but after the soul is exercised and prepared inwardly (that being wasted which hindered, that raised up which lay low, that made straight which lay crooked, that made plain that was rough, and so the way is prepared and fitted for the great appearance of the great God and Saviour, in the pure, bright gospel glory, Spirit, and power,) doth the King come suddenly into his temple; not when the foundation is laid, but when Sion is built up, doth God appear in his glory therein. Read Isa. xl. 3, 4, 5, and consider. After John's coming in a body of flesh, and preparing the way by his outward ministry, Christ came in a body of flesh, and was revealed as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, by the life, Spirit, and power that that body was filled with. And after John comes in Spirit, and prepares the way in any heart, by the mighty and effectual operation of his ministry there, then Christ comes after him in Spirit, in the

great power and glory of the Father, and the Father is revealed, and the Son also in the Spirit of light, life, love and righteousness, and the glory of the Lord is beheld with open face, in the glass of life and righteousness, and the soul is changed into the same image, and partakes of the heavenly glory, and is married or joined to the Lord, to become one spirit with him, and hath fellowship with the Father and the Son in the light of life; and this is the gospel-state and glory, and there is not another.

Now take one scripture more which sums up all dispensations, and sets up the dispensation of the Son in Spirit as the last, as the dispensation of the last days: It is Heb. i. 1. Read but what things are spoken of to be brought to pass in the last days of the great gospel-glory, to be revealed then of the perfect redeeming to God, and centering in him, of being married to him, and becoming one with him, &c. and of the Son's being the minister in the gospel-state, by the Spirit and power of the endless life, to bring it all forth, and accomplish it in the husbandry and building of God. Consider the place; at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake in times past by Moses, by the prophets, by John; but now the last days are come, now the last dispensation is come, now the covenant wherein God himself is the teacher, is come, now the time of building the Sion, the Jerusalem, wherein God himself will dwell for ever, is come; now the light of the city of God is come, which is an eternal light, an unchange-

able light. Now the Spirit of love, which brings up the gospel-life, is come, and edifies the holy gospel-building, in the gospel-love and life. Oh! the light, the life, the love, the righteousness, the divine nature, which is now revealed and partook of in the Son! He is the brightness of the Father's glory; and thither he brings his. What would ye have more? He destroys antichrist inwardly, by the brightness of his coming or appearing. Oh! the desolations that he makes inwardly of sin and iniquity in the hearts of his! He is the express image (or engraving) of his Father's substance; and he makes thee, who art one with him in his Spirit of life and love, of the same image with him. He translateth thee out of Satan's image, into his very image. His light, his life, his love, his righteousness, his divine nature, doth not wax old as a garment, but endure and remain the same for ever. He is Alpha and Omega. There was nothing before him, nor shall be after him. There is no other thing appertaining to life and godliness, but what he now dispenseth in the gospel; no other kingdom, but what stands in the power of the life and righteousness, which is now revealed in the peace, love, and joy of the Spirit. The gospel-building is his house; and he is faithful in all his house, as a Son, having received all power from his Father, to gather fully, to preserve fully, to build up fully, to leaven fully with life and righteousness, even in soul, body, and spirit, to lead into the Holy Land, and to enable to keep the holy sabbath there, even to cease from sin, and every thing that

burdens the life, and to rest in God, and not work any thing of ourselves any more, but to feel the Spirit of life, love, and power work in us. And his yoke of life, his yoke of love, his yoke of the power, is the pure gospel-liberty comprehended in. The Lord Jesus did appear in flesh; but now he appears in Spirit, and is Spirit; giving himself to be life and Spirit in his. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and every thing which is of a fleshly nature, which deceiveth and imbondageth, wherein the pure liberty is not, he discovereth, and keepeth his out of, that so they may stand fast in the pure liberty of the light, life, and love of his Holy Spirit, wherewith he maketh his free.

LETTERS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON,

WRITTEN TO HIS RELATIONS AND FRIENDS.

[Selected from a volume published in 1796.]

DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED two letters from thee lately, whereby the sense is revived in me of thy great love to me, and the Lord's great goodness to thee, in administering that which rejoiceth and refresheth thee. Now this advice ariseth in my heart. O, keep cool and low before the Lord, that the seed, the pure living seed may spring more and more in thee, and thy heart be united more and more to the Lord therein. Coolness of spirit is a precious frame, and the glory of the Lord most shines therein, in its own lustre and brightness; and when the soul is low before the Lord it is still near the seed, and preciously (in its life) one with the seed. And when the seed riseth, thou shalt have liberty in the Lord to rise with it; only take heed of that part which will be outrunning it, and getting above it, and so not ready to descend again, and keep low in the deeps with it.

O, my friend, I have a sense that this hath been the error of that people thou hast formerly walked with; and I observe in thy spirit yet a liableness thereto; which the Lord give thee to watch against, that thou mayest come to a pure observation and discerning of the everlasting unchangeable seed in thy own heart, and mayest daily feel thy mind bowed down and worship in it, and become wholly leavened into it, and perfectly changed and preserved by it.

Then the mixtures will be gone, and thou shalt know, enjoy, and be one with that, and have thy mind stayed in that, which will not mix with that which is of a contrary nature to the holy and heavenly Truth; nor suffer that which is married to it, to mix with any thing with which *it* will not mix. This is the virgin state indeed, in which the soul is married to the Lamb, and become one spirit with the Lamb for ever. That thou mayest grow in the Lord, abound more and more with his life and power, feel mortality swallowed up of life, come into the fulness of the kingdom, know, enjoy, possess, the full dominion which is given there, and thy soul be satisfied, according to the largeness of its breathings after the living God, is my desire and travail for thee.

P. S. We are here but a while in this world, for the Lord to make use of us, and serve himself by us, and so, by his ordering of us, to fit us for the crown of glory, which he will give us fully to wear in the other world. Now feel the child's nature, which chooseth nothing, but desires the fulfilling of

the Father's will in it. I cannot desire to enjoy any thing, saith the nature of the true birth, but as the Father, of himself, pleaseth to give me to enjoy. There is a time to want as well as to abound, while we are in this world. And the times of wanting, as well as abounding, are greatly advantageous to us. How should faith, love, patience, meekness, and the excellency and sufficiency of God's grace shine, but by, in, and through, the many exercises and varieties of conditions wherewith the Lord visiteth his? Yea, the greatest, in the life, power, and glory of the Lord, have the greatest trials and exercises; which is to their advantage, as also for the good and benefit of others, and to the great honour and glory of the Lord. O, at all times, and in all conditions, take heed of a will, take heed of a wisdom above the seed's will, and above the seed's wisdom.

Let the Lord alone be all in thee, and make thee every day what he pleaseth; and in due time thou shalt know a life, even the seed's life, the Son's life, whom all the angels are to worship, and the mystery of whose life, the angels desire to look into, as it is revealed and brought forth. So be still and quiet, and silent before the Lord, not putting up any request to the Father (nor cherishing any desire in thee,) but in the seed's lowly nature and purely springing life; and the Lord give thee the clear discerning, in the lowly seed, of all that springs and ariseth in thy heart.

And O! that thou mightest receive this counsel, and learn this following lesson thor-

oughly. Know nothing, will nothing, but only as the seed knows and wills in thee; and so thou hast nothing to do but to join with the seed in its knowing and willing, and then thou wilt be able rejoicingly to tell me what are become of mixtures.

Thou didst read precious things of the seed, when thou wast here, written outwardly; O, that thou mightest read the same things written inwardly in thy own heart; which that thou mayest do, become as a weaned child, not exercising thyself in things too high or too wonderful for thee. Every secret thing, every spiritual mystery, but what God opens to thee, is too high and wonderful for thee. And if the Lord, at any time, opens to thee deep mysteries, fear before the Lord, and go no further into them than the Lord leads thee. The error is still in the comprehending knowing mind, but never in the lowly weighty seed of life; whither the Lord God of my life more and more lead thee, and counsel thee to take up thy dwelling-place there, daily instructing thee so to do. For the greatest as well as the least must be daily taught of the Lord, both in ascending and descending, or they will miss their way; yea, they must be daily taught of him to be silent before him, and know to be still in him, or they will be apt to miss in either.

This from thy friend,

I. P.

Amersham, Woodside,
4th of 5th Month, 1679.

DEAR FRIEND,

THY condition cannot but be weak and dark, until the light of life arise in thee, and the power of the Lord overcome and subdue the power of darkness, which strives to keep the seed of life in the grave, and bonds of death. It is the Lord's mercy to give thee breathings after life, and cries unto him against that which oppresseth thee; and happy wilt thou be when he shall fill thy soul with that which he hath given thee to breathe after. Only let thy heart wait for strength to trust him with the season, for his long tarrying is thy salvation, and the destruction of those enemies, which, while any strength remains in them, will never suffer thee and thy God to dwell uninterruptedly together.—Therefore they must needs die, and he who hath the power to kill them, knows the way; which, to the appearing of thy sense, will be as if he meant to kill the life of thy soul, and not of them; but lie still under his hand, and be content to be unable to judge concerning his ways and workings in thy heart; and thou shalt at sometimes feel an inward leaven of life from his Holy Spirit, whereby he will change and transform thy spirit into his likeness, in some measure, for the present; and, though it be quickly gone again, and the whole land so overspread with enemies, that there is no sight of redemption or the redeemed left, but the soul in a worse condition than before; yet be not troubled; for if trouble do abound, and there be tossing, and storms, and

tempests, and no peace, nor any thing left visible to support, yet lie still, and sink beneath, till a secret hope stir, which will stay the heart in the midst of all these, until the Lord administer comfort, who knows how and what relief to give to the weary traveller, that knows not where it is, nor which way to look, nor where to expect a path. How shall I speak to thee, how shall I mourn over thee? O, that thou mayest be upheld to the day of God's mercy to thy soul, and be gathered out of all such knowledge as thou canst comprehend or contain in what is natural, into the feeling of life, that thou mayest know the difference between what it is to live upon somewhat received from God, and what it is to have God live with thee, and administer life to thee, at his pleasure; thou being kept in the nothingness, emptiness, poverty, and perfect resignation of spirit!

This counsel is to thee through a poor weak vessel,

I. P.

It is of the infinite mercy and compassion of the Lord, that his pure love visiteth any of us; and it is by the preservation thereof alone, that we stand. If he leave us at any time, but one moment, what are we; and who is it that provoketh him not to depart? Let him throw the first stone at him that falls.

In the Truth itself, in the living power and virtue, there is no offence; but that part which is not perfectly redeemed, hath still matter for the temptation to work upon, and may be taken in the snare. Let him that stands, take heed lest he fall; and, in the bowels of pity, mourn over and wait for the restoring of him that is fallen. That which is so apt to be offended, is the same with that which falls. O, do not reason in the high-mindedness, against any that turn aside from the pure guide; but fear, lest the unbelieving and fleshly wise part, get up in thee also. O, know the weakness of the creature in the withdrawings of the life, and the strength of the enemy in that hour, and the free grace and mercy which alone can preserve, and thou wilt rather wonder that any stand, than that some fall.

When the pure springs of life open in the heart, immediately the enemy watcheth his opportunity to get entrance; and many times finds entrance soon after, the soul, little fearing or suspecting him, having lately felt such mighty unconquerable strength; and yet how often then doth he get in, and smite the life down to the ground; and what may he not do with the creature, unless the Lord graciously help!

O, great is the mystery of godliness, the way of life narrow, the travel to the land of rest long, hard, and sharp; it is easy miscarrying, it is easy stepping aside, at any time; it is easy losing the Lord's glorious presence; unless the defence about it, by his Almighty arm, be kept up.

There is a time for the Lord's taking down the fence from his own vineyard, because of transgression, and then the wild boar may easily break in.

Ah, who tastes not of this in some measure, and what hinders that he tastes not of it in a greater measure? Ah, turn in from the fleshly wisdom and reasonings, unto the pure river of life itself; and wait there to have that judged which hath taken offence, lest if it grow stronger in thee, it draw thee from the life (which alone is able to preserve thee,) and so thou also fall.

This is in dear love to thee; retire from that part which looketh out, and feel the inward virtue of that which can restore and preserve thee.

I. P.

There are some who have been educated in a profession of Christianity, and have improved it by study; but have never known the virtue, power, and inward life thereof; but as men, with the man's part, wisdom, understanding, and seriousness of mind, have considered of the truth and weight of things contained in the Scriptures; and so have received somewhat of the holy doctrine into their natural understanding, and given themselves up to the observation and practice thereof, according as they have apprehended things.

These have become more serious and excellent than others, but fall very far short of

the nature and state of Christianity; yea, the strictest among these many times become the greatest opposers and persecutors of the true Christianity.

FRIENDS,

BE not discouraged because of your souls' enemies. Are ye troubled with thoughts, fears, doubts, imaginations, reasonings, &c. yea, do ye see yet much in you unsubdued to the power of life? O, do not fear it; do not look at it, so as to be discouraged by it; but look to him; look up to the power which is over all their strength; wait for the descendings of the power upon you; abide in the faith of the Lord's help; and wait in the patience till the Lord arise; and see if his arm do not scatter, what your's could not. So be still before him, and in stillness believe in his name; yea, enter not into the hurryings of the enemy (though they fill the soul;) for there is yet somewhat to which they cannot enter, from whence patience, and faith, and hope, will spring up in you, in the midst of all that they can do.

So into this sink; in this lie hid in the evil hour; and the temptations will pass away, and the tempter's strength be broken, and the arm of the Lord (which brake him) revealed; and then ye shall see, that he raised but a sea of trouble in your souls, to sink himself by; and the Lord will throw the horse and his rider (which trampled upon and

rode over the just in you) into that sea; and ye shall stand upon the bank, and sing the song of Moses to him that drowned him, and delivered you from him; and in due season ye shall sing the song of the Lamb also, when his life springs up in you in his pure dominion; triumphing over death, and all that is contrary to God, both within and without.

Now, Friends, in a sensible waiting and giving up to the Lord, in the daily exercise, by the daily cross to that in you, which is not of the life, this work will daily go on; and ye will feel from the Lord that, which will help, relieve, refresh, and satisfy, which neither tongue nor words can utter. And in that the Lord God breathe upon you, preserve and fill you with his life and Holy Spirit; to the growth and rejoicing of your souls in him, who is our blessed Father, and merciful Redeemer; in the Lord Jesus Christ, our head and king for ever and for evermore.

And then, as to what may befal us outwardly, in this confused state of things, shall we not trust our tender Father, and rest satisfied in his will? Are we not engraven in his heart, and on the palms of his hands, and can he forget us in any thing he doth? Shall any thing hurt us? Shall any thing come between us and our life; between us and his love and tender care over us? What though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither there be any fruit in the vine; what though the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat; what though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls;

may we not, for all this, rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation? And what though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; what though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; is there not a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God? Is not the joy, the virtue, the life, the sweet refreshment thereof, felt in the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High? And he that provides inward food for the inward man, inward clothing, inward refreshment; shall he not provide also sufficient for the outward? Yea, shall he not bear up the mind, and be our strength, portion, armour, rock, peace, joy, and full satisfaction, in every condition? For it is not the condition makes miserable, but the want of him in the condition: he is the substance of all, the virtue of all, the life of all, the power of all; he nourisheth, he preserveth, he upholds, with the creatures or without the creatures, as it pleaseth him; and he that hath him, he that is with him, he that is in him, cannot want. Hath the spirit of this world content in all that it enjoys? No; it is restless, it is unsatisfied. But can tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, come between the love of the Father to the child, or the child's rest, content, and delight in his love? And doth not the love, the peace, the joy, the rest felt, swallow up all the bitterness and sorrow of the outward condition?

The seed, the godliness, the uprightness, the true nature and birth, hath not only the promise of eternal life, but also of whatever is necessary for the vessel wherein it dwells in this life too; so dwell in that to which is the promise, and live upon the promise; yea, live upon that which cannot miss of the promise, but feels the presence and power of the Father in all, and over all. And the just lives by his faith: and he that is in union with the just, lives by the faith of the just, and takes no more care than the lilies, but leaves the care of all, to whom it properly belongs, and who hath taken it upon him; who nourisheth, clotheth, preserveth, and causeth the lilies of the field to grow and flourish in beauty and glory; and shall he not much more clothe, nourish, and take care of his own lilies, the heavenly lilies, the lilies of his garden.

So let us not look out like the world, or judge or fear according to the appearance of things, after the manner of the world; but sanctify the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and let him be our fear and dread, and he shall be an hiding place unto us in the storms, and in the tempests, which are coming thick upon the earth.

So, my dear Friends, let us retire, and dwell in the peace which God breathes, and lie down in the Lamb's patience and stillness, night and day, which nothing can wear out or disturb; and so the preservation of the poor and needy, shall be felt in his name, and glory sung to his name, over all; which is a

strong tower, a mighty impregnable rock of defence, against all assaults and dangers whatsoever; which they that have trusted therein, have already experienced it to be; and they that continue trusting therein, shall always experience it so to be, in all trials and dangers, whatever may happen, of what kind soever, even to the end. Amen.

DEAR FRIEND,

I AM sensible of thy sore travail and deep distress, and how hard it is for thee to meet with that which is comfortable and refreshing, and how easily again it is lost; and whence it ariseth, even from the working of the enemy in a mystery of deceit in thy heart; wherein thou dost not perceive nor suspect him, but swallowest down his baits, and so he smites thee with his hook, and thereby draws thee back into the region of darkness; and then entereth that part in thee which is in nature one with him, filling it with his wickedness, and then laying loads of accusations upon thee, as if they were true. These are not strange things to the travellers after the Lord, but such as are usually met with in the like cases; but if thy eye was made single and opened by the Lord, thou wouldest see those baits, and turn from that which thou now so readily swallowest down; and so avoid the stroke, and keep thy station in the

light and mercy of the Lord. Thou must not look so much at the evil that is nigh, but rather at that which stands ready to pity and help, and which hath pitied and helped thy distressed soul, and will pity and help it again. Why is there a mercy-seat, but for the sinner to look towards, in time of need?

Neither must thou hearken to the questionings of the insnaring questioner, but cleave to that which shuts them out, keeping to the sense of the love and mercy, when the Lord is kind and tender to thee. When the enemy entered thy habitation again, and broke thy rest, peace, and enjoyment of the Lord; again an earnest desire after cleansing arose in thee; not from the life, but in the evil; which was also a means to rob thee of that, which in its abiding and powerful operation, cleanseth the heart; and here thou wouldest be limiting the Lord in his dealings, who worketh according to the council of his own will, and visiteth when and where he pleaseth. And thus the enemy having caught thee with his mysterious workings, he then draws thee into the pit of darkness, where the remembrance of life and the sense of mercy and love vanisheth; and there is no help for thee by any thing thou canst do or think: but be patient, till the Lord's tender mercy and love visit thee again, and then look up to him against this and such like snares, which would come between thee and the appearance of the Lord's love; that thou mayest feel more of his abidings with thee, and of the sweet effects thereof. For these things are not to destroy thee,

but to teach thee wisdom; which the Lord is able, through many exercises and sore trials, to bestow upon thee; which my soul will exceedingly rejoice to hear the tidings of: that thy heart may be rid of all that burdeneth, and filled with all it rightly desires after, in the proper season and goodness of the Lord: to whose wise ordering and tender mercy I commit thee, remaining

Thy faithful friend,

I. P.

My dear Friend,

Some time after writing the foregoing, this arose in me to thee. If the Lord in thy waiting upon him, to search and try thy heart and ways, shall please to shew thee any thing amiss therein, mind this counsel on my heart to thee. Be not looking at it too much on the one hand, or excusing it on the other hand, but sink down beneath thyself, retiring thither where thou mayest receive from the Lord true judgment concerning it, and also strength against it. And know this in the holy experience, that thou must be weakened by the Lord, and be contented in or with thy weak and distressed estate, if thou wouldest receive mercy and strength from him. And the more thou art weakened and distressed, the more thou art fitted for, and the more abundantly shalt thou partake of his mercy and strength; waiting upon him in the meek, quiet, patient, and resigned spirit, which he will not fail to

work thy mind into; that, in the issue of all, thou mayest reap the quiet fruits of righteousness and heavenly peace from his hand.—Amen, so be it from the Lord to thy soul.

DEAR FRIEND,

As I was lately retired in spirit and waiting upon the Lord, having a sense on me of thy long, sore, and deep, affliction and distress, there arose a scripture in my heart to lay before thee, namely, Hebrews xii. 5, 6, 7, which I entreat thee to call for a Bible, and hear read, before thou proceed to what follows.

O, my friend, after it hath pleased the Lord in tender mercy to visit us, and turn our minds from the world and ourselves towards him, and to beget and nourish that which is pure and living of himself in us; yet, notwithstanding this, there remains somewhat at first (yea and perhaps for a long time) which is to be searched out by the light of the Lord, and brought down and subdued by his afflicting hand. When there is indeed somewhat of an holy will formed in the day of God's power; and the soul, in some measure, begotten and brought forth to live to God in and out of the womb of the heavenly wisdom; yet all the earthly will and wisdom is not thereby presently removed, but there are hidden things of the old nature and spirit still remaining; which, perhaps, appear not, but sink inward into their root, that they may save their lives;

which man cannot possibly find out in his own heart, but as the Lord reveals them to him. But how doth the Lord find them out? O consider his fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. By his casting into the furnace of affliction, the fire searcheth the deep, sore, distressing, affliction, which rends and tears the very inwards, finds out both the seed and the chaff, purifying the pure gold from the dross; and there, at length, the quiet state is witnessed, and the quiet fruit of righteousness brought forth by the searching and consuming nature and operation of the fire. O, that thy soul may be tried unto victory, over all that is not of the pure life in thee; and that thou mayest wait to feel the pure seed, or measure of life, in thee, and die into the seed, feeling death unto all that is not of the seed in thee; and that thou mayest feel life, healing refreshment, support, and comfort from the God of thy life, in the seed; and no where else, nor at any time, but as the Lord pleaseth to administer it to thee there. O, the Lord guide thee daily, and keep thy mind to him; at least looking towards the holy place of the springing of his life and power in thy heart. Look unto him. Help, pity, salvation, will arise in his due time; but it will not arise from any thing thou canst do or think; and faith will spring and patience be given, and hope in the tender Father of mercies, and a meek and quiet spirit will be witnessed; and the Lamb's nature springing up and opening in thee, from his precious seed, which will excel in nature, kind, degree, and virtue, all

the faith, patience, hope, meekness, &c. which thou or any else otherwise can attain unto. O, look not at thy pain or sorrow, how great soever; but look from them, look off them, look beyond them to the Deliverer; whose power is over them, and whose loving, wise, and tender spirit is able to do thee good by them. And if the outward afflictions work out an exceeding weight of glory; O! what shall the inward do for those who are humbly, brokenly, and faithfully, exercised before the Lord by them. O, wait to feel the seed, and the cry of thy soul (in the breathing springing life of the seed) to its Father, with its sweet subjection to him. And wait for the risings of the power in thy heart, in the Father's seasons, and faith in the power, that thou mayest feel inward healing of all the inward wounds which the Lord makes in thy soul, through his love to thee for thy good.

If thou wilt receive the kingdom that cannot be shaken, thou must wait to have that discovered in thee which may be shaken; and the Lord arising terribly to shake the earth, and it removed out of its place as a cottage, and the heavens also rolled up like a scroll. And while the Lord is doing this, he will be hiding thee in the hollow of his hand (thy mind still retiring to the seed,) and will, in these troublesome and dismal times, inwardly be forming the new heavens and the new earth, wherein (when they are brought forth and established) dwells righteousness. And as sure as the Lord shakes and removes the old, so surely will he bring forth and es-

tablish the new. And when the old will, and the old wisdom and understanding, is removed (which if the Lord God were not strong and wise, he could never bring forth and effect in the heart,) the place of the dragons, the place of the wicked inwardly, shall be found no more; but Zion shall be known and witnessed inwardly, the place of God's dwelling and rest, and Jerusalem a quiet habitation for ever; and the precious law of life shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and the soul shall hear and live by it, with full delight and satisfaction, on God's holy mountain, on the top of all other mountains, and nothing shall be able to disturb or make afraid any more. The Lord lead thee, day by day, in the right way, towards the witnessing and obtaining this; and keep thy mind stayed upon him, in whatever befalls thee, that the belief of his love and hope in his mercy (when thou art at the lowest ebb) may keep up thy head above the billows, and thou mayest go on in the disciples state, learning righteousness and holiness of him, who teacheth to deny and put off unholiness and unrighteousness, and to know, embrace, and put on newness of life, and the holiness and righteousness thereof.

The Lord God of my life be with thee, preserving and ordering thy heart for the great day of his love and mercy; which will come in the appointed season, when the heart is fully exercised and fitted by the Lord for it, and will not tarry. I. P.

TO FRIENDS IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS.

[FROM HIS WORKS.]

DEAR FRIENDS,

YE have a deep place in my heart, and my cries are to the Lord for you, that ye may live to him, and find his life springing up and abounding in you. What is it to have a distinct name, or distinct meetings from the world, unless the power of the Lord be felt in your hearts, and his presence in your assemblies? Oh! that the Lord would awaken you! Oh! that the Lord would quicken you! Oh! that it would please the Lord to raise up a strict watch in you, against all drowsiness, and carelessness, and temptations, and snares of the enemy, that ye may travel on your journey, with your backs upon the world, and your faces towards Sion; never looking back to the fleshly nature, desires, or lusts, to entertain any thing of that any more, which ye have parted with in the demonstrations and leadings of life, but still pressing on further and further, till ye come to apprehend and be possessed of that for which ye have been apprehended by God, and drawn in some measure towards.

O my friends! There is a path of life in which ye must travel, even to the very end of it, or the crown of life is not to be received! Oh! that ye might travel on! Oh! that nothing might stop you! Oh! that ye might every day wait for and feel the leader, and walk on

with him in the simplicity, uprightness, and sense of his life, out of the reach of that wisdom, which is ever and anon forming reasonings in the heart against it, and striving to darken, and make the plain way of God intricate to the soul!

My life often reacheth to you, my soul exceedingly longeth after you! And in the stirrings of the same life be ye also helpful to me, crying to the Lord for me, that I may abide with him, feel his preservation, and dwell in that which he hath chosen to appear to and refresh the soul in, that I may be acceptable to him, and further helpful to you, in the season of the stirrings of his precious and powerful life in my heart. The Lord God of mercy watch over you, pruning and keeping down all the earthliness and corruption in any of you, and watering and cherishing his own plant in you all, that ye may daily witness the dying and decrease of the one, and the quickening and growth of the other, even till death be perfectly consumed and swallowed up by the growth, power, and presence of the immortal life in you, and your souls safe and happy in your God.

And so to the tender mercies and care of the Lord do I give you all up, breathing for you (as for my own soul) that ye may be perfectly the Lord's, perfectly given unto him, perfectly waiting upon him, and daily receiving into your precious vessels the precious living testimonies of his love and acceptance, and his sweet heavenly dews, which will exceedingly refresh and make your hearts glad,

as he causeth them to descend and light upon you. So that which is of God in your hearts every day, wait to feel God breathing upon, that it may open unto him, receive strength from him, and ye in it be more and more gathered and united to the Lord, even till ye wholly become one nature, mind, and spirit with him; and then ye will see the end of your travels, and sit down in his joy, and peace, and pure rest, from all labouring after life, and all sorrows for the want and absence of it, and all fears of losing or being separated from it; being established in the power which is over all, and which preserveth all that are encompassed with it, and established in it, for ever and ever.

[Written in Aylesbury Gaol,
22d of 3d mo. 1666.]

Oh! my friends! prize the rich tender mercy of the Lord, in calling you out of this world, towards his everlasting inheritance and fulness of life! And let not any thing of this world come between him and you; but let all that is of this worldly nature, both within and without, be trampled upon by you, and the price of the high calling of our God in Christ Jesus, be faithfully and earnestly pursued after; that none fall short of the hope and glory set before him, but that every one may so run, as certainly to obtain and enjoy for ever, even the dominion and reign of God over all that is contrary to him, and the sitting down in the rest, joy, and peace of his nature for evermore. Amen.

APPENDIX.

WHILE the Works of ISAAC PENINGTON may with propriety be considered, as furnishing the best Memorial of the Author; the Reader who is desirous of obtaining a more full account of his life, than is given in the Introduction to this volume, will find many interesting particulars in the Testimonies of his Friends, prefixed to the several editions of his Writings. But to the brief sketch here referred to, the Compiler thinks the succeeding extracts will form an acceptable addition, as tending to exemplify the character of the Writer.

The first in order, are the concluding paragraphs of an Address to the King [Charles II.] and Parliament, written about the year 1665, soon after the passage, or renewal and rigid enforcement of an act 'to prevent and suppress seditious conventicles,' by which all Dissenters from the Church of England were prohibited from meeting together, for the purpose of divine worship, in any greater number than *five* persons, under very severe penalties, extending under certain circumstances, to transportation for seven years.—Friends at the same time being subjected to frequent imprisonments and other sufferings, in consequence of their conscientious refusal to take the oaths that were tendered them, as well as from other causes that were sought against them, at a period when liberty of conscience appears to have been almost totally disregarded by the reigning power:

—— AFTER ye have done all ye can, even made laws as strong as ye can, and put them in the strictest course of execution ye can, one night from the Lord may end the controversy,

and shew whether we please the Lord in obeying him, or ye in making laws against us for our fidelity and obedience to him.

And as the Lord is able to overturn you, so if ye mistake your work, misinterpreting the passages of his providence, and erring in heart concerning the ground of his former displeasure; and so (through the error of judgment) set yourselves in opposition against him, replanting the plants which he will not have grow, and plucking up the plants of his planting; do ye not in this case provoke the Lord, even to put forth the strength which is in him against you? We are poor worms. Alas! if ye had only us to deal with, we should be nothing in your hands! But if his strength stand behind us, we shall prove a very burthensome stone, and ye will hardly be able to remove us out of the place wherein God hath set us, and where he pleaseth to have us disposed of. And happy were it for you, if instead of persecuting us, ye yourselves were drawn to wait for the same begettings of God (which we have felt) out of the earthly nature, into his life and nature, and did learn of him to govern in that; then might ye be established indeed, and be freed from the danger of those shakings and overturnings which God is hastening upon the earth.

Now because ye may be apt to think, that I write these things for my own sake, and the sakes of my friends and companions in the truth of God, that we might escape the sufferings and severity which we are like to undergo from you; and not so mainly and chiefly

for your sakes, lest ye should bring the wrath of God and misery upon your souls and bodies; to prevent this mistake in you, I shall add what followeth. Indeed this is not the intent of my heart; for I have long expected, and do still expect, this cup of outward affliction and persecution from you, and my heart is quieted and satisfied therein, knowing that the Lord will bring glory to his name, and good to us out of it: but I am sure it is not good for you to afflict us for that which the Lord requireth of us, and wherein he accepteth us; and ye will find it the bitterest work that ever ye went about, and in the end will wish that the Lord had rather never given you this day of prosperity, than that he should suffer you thus to make use of it. Now that ye may the more clearly see the temper of my spirit, and how my heart stands in this thing, I shall a little open unto you my faith and hope about it, in these ensuing particulars.

First, I am assured in my heart and soul, that this despised people (called QUAKERS) is of the Lord's begetting in his own life and nature. Indeed, had I not seen the power of God in them, and received from the Lord an unquestionable testimony concerning them, I had never looked towards them; for they were otherwise very despisable in my eyes. And this I cannot but testify concerning them, that I have found the life of God in my owning them; and that which God hath begotten in my heart refreshed by the power of life in them; and none but the Lord knows the beau-

and excellency of glory, which he hath hid under this mean appearance.

Secondly, The Lord hath hitherto preserved them against great opposition, and is still able to preserve them. Every power hitherto hath made nothing of over-running them; yet they have hitherto stood, by the care and tender mercy of the Lord; and the several powers which have persecuted them, have fallen one after another.

Thirdly, I have had experience myself of the Lord's goodness and preservation of me, in my suffering with them for the testimony of his truth, who made my bonds pleasant to me, and my noisome prison (enough to have destroyed my weakly and tender-educated nature) a place of pleasure and delight, where I was comforted by my God night and day, and filled with prayers for his people; as also with love to, and prayers for, those who had been the means of outwardly afflicting me and others upon the Lord's account.

Fourthly, I have no doubt in my heart that the Lord will deliver us. The strength of man, the resolution of man, is nothing in my eye, in compare with the Lord. Whom the Lord loveth he can save at his pleasure. Hath he begun to break our bonds and deliver us, and shall we now distrust him? Are we in a worse condition than Israel was, when the sea was before them, the mountains on each side, and the Egyptians behind pursuing them? He indeed that looketh with man's eye, can see no ground of hope, nor hardly a possibility of deliverance, but (to the eye of

faith) it is now nearer than when God began at first to deliver.

Fifthly, It is the delight of the Lord, and his glory, to deliver his people, when to the eye of sense it seemeth impossible. Then doth the Lord delight to stretch forth his arm, when none else can help; and then doth it please him to deal with the enemies of his truth and people, when they are lifted up above the fear of him, and are ready to say in their hearts concerning them; *They are now in our hands; who can deliver them?*

Well: were it not in love to you, and in pity (in relation to what will certainly befall you, if ye go on in this course) I could say in the joy of my heart, and in the sense of the good will of my God to us, who suffereth these things to come to pass, *Go on; try it out with the Spirit of the Lord: come forth with your laws, and prisons, and spoiling of our goods, and banishment, and death,* (if the Lord please) *and see if ye can carry it.* For we come not forth against you in our own wills, or in any enmity against your persons or government, or in any stubbornness or refractoriness of spirit; but with the Lamb-like nature which the Lord our God hath begotten in us, which is taught and enabled by him both to do his will, and to suffer for his name's sake. And if we cannot thus overcome you, (even in patience of spirit, and in love to you) and if the Lord our God please not to appear for us, we are content to be overcome by you. So the will of the Lord be done, saith my soul.

While the preceding paragraphs exhibit an unshaken confidence in divine support, and a christian firmness in pleading the cause of religious liberty, rarely surpassed; the following extract from a piece, which appears to have been written about the same time, evinces that the Author possessed in an eminent degree, that Charity, the absence of which no other christian virtue can supply:

My soul hath mourned, I may say, almost from my cradle, about the estate of this creation. To behold man fallen from his glory, departed from his God, living without the sense of him, and sowing the seeds of eternal misery for his poor soul (which he must as certainly reap as he hath sown, unless he travel the path of redemption in the powerful leadings and guidance of God's Holy Spirit;) this hath so broken my heart, (together with the close exercises which have continually attended this poor wearied spirit) that I have often wondered how the natural life could be contained in the natural vessel.

I am a lover of mankind in general, and have been a deep sufferer with, and traveller for, all the miserable. None knows the path of my sorrows, or the extent of my bowels, but he that made me. It is not natural or kindly to me to upbraid any man with any kind of wickedness, or ever so justly-deserved misery; but my bowels work concerning him towards the spring of eternal power and compassions, even as I would be pitied and represented to the Father of mercies in the like condition. Indeed I have been emptied from vessel to vessel, and tossed with multitudes

of storms and tempests; yet the savour of my life remaineth with me to this day, and the Spirit of my God breatheth on my heart; blessed be his holy name for ever. And though I walk with one sort of people, because my heart saith (yea, the Spirit of the eternal God hath witnessed unto me, and shewn me in that light which cannot deceive, and to that eye which cannot be deceived) that they are the people whom he hath chosen out of all the gatherings (throughout the earth) from the apostacy, to manifest his power in, and his presence among; I say, though I have been guided and led by the Spirit of the Lord to walk among these; yet am I not bounded there, either in the love, or in the unity of my heart, but I have unity with the integrity and zeal for God which is in others, of what sort or gathering soever; and I have tender bowels for all, even for those which hate and persecute that which is my life, and hath the love of my heart for ever.

Oh! how have I prayed for the lost world! For all the souls of mankind how hath my soul bowed in unutterable breathings of spirit before my God, and could not be silenced until he quieted my spirit in the righteousness and excellency of his will, and bid me leave it to him. And as touching this nation, and the several sorts in it, even those who seem most cast off, and without all sense, [religious sensibility;] yet the preciousness of their souls have I spread before the Lord my God with tears.

To the preceding, in the original, is subjoined an address to people of several different classes. To fill a page which would otherwise remain vacant, we copy the following, which at the same time seems to present an appropriate conclusion to these Selections:

To such as are still tender, and dare not but exercise a conscience towards God.—— Friends, keep your standing in the life of God. What God hath begotten in you, let it depend upon him. Let him do what he will with his own in you, and let the creature be subject to that living principle, which God hath sown and raised in your hearts; sell not your peace with God for any ease or advantage in this world. Let the tenderness of your consciences, which is of value with God, be precious also in your eyes. The times and seasons are in the Father's hand, and he seeth good to let this day of trial come upon you.—His grace is able to carry you all through. It will be for his honour, to let all the world see how dear your God is to you, and how able ye are (in the meekness and strength of the Lamb's Spirit) to suffer for his name's sake. Thy will, O God, be done. The cup which our Father gives us, shall we not drink it? The Lord preserve you in uprightness of heart towards him, in meekness of spirit towards those that afflict you, and in true love and good will towards all; that his light, which hath gathered you, may shine over all the darkness which opposeth it; and his life, which hath quickened and preserved you, may be famous over all the territories and dominions of death.

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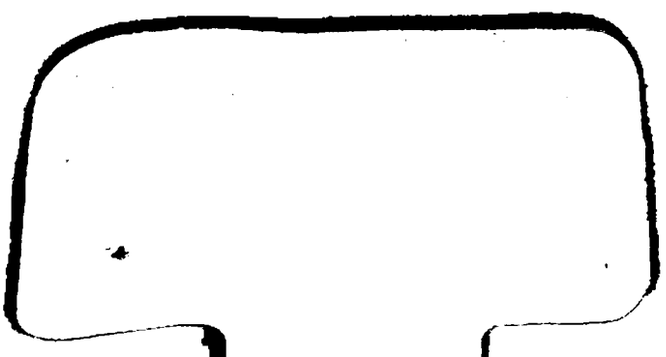
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